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2dartist

101

Issue 101 | May 2014

43 pages of tutorials inside!

How to light a midday scene

Nacho Yagüe provides a detailed tutorial that covers the creation of a room with morning light

DEPICT INTERESTING LIGHT EFFECTS

Discover how to capture the mood as Geoffrey Ernault shares his speed painting techniques

Digital art for games

Sabin Boykinov reveals what exactly it was that fueled him to break into the industry!

Learn to paint standout features

Create a dynamic character

Tatianna Kolobukhova (SneznyBars) reveals her painting process for creating vibrant characters

+plus

- 10 of the best gallery images
- **Digital Art Master: Alex Tiani**
- Fernanda Suarez's sketchbook
- **Custom brush portraits**
- and much more!

Editor's Letter

JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to the May issue of *2dartist* magazine!

Bursting with dynamic females, painterly portraits and standout caricatures: issue 101 is full of impressive characters! Fernanda Suarez flips open her sketchbook and Sabin Boykinov gives us an insight into his career creating digital art in the games industry!

Issue 101 also delves into tips for lighting your 2D scenes, with top techniques from Nacho Yagüe and Geoffrey Ernault! And there's a wealth of inspirational art from Tim Löchner, Laura Sava, Efflam Mercier and more.

Enjoy!

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Contributors

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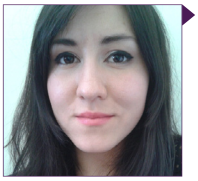
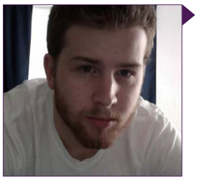
Sabin Boykinov was born in Rousse, Bulgaria. He currently works as a Lead Concept Artist in Haemimont Games studio in Sofia and makes freelance illustrations for a variety of projects.



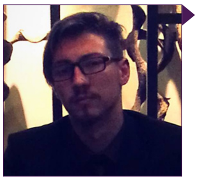
FERNANDA SUAREZ
Fernanda Suarez is a Freelance Illustrator and Concept Artist. She is currently working on artwork for a new board game by Plaid Hat Games, illustrations for Paizo Publishing, and private commissions.



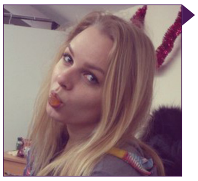
HOUSTON SHARP
Houston Sharp currently works as a freelance concept artist and Illustrator in the film and game industry, when he is not in-term at school. He also enjoys simply painting portraits.

NACHO YAGÜE
Nacho Yagüe is a concept artist in the videogame industry who has worked in projects such as Splinter Cell Blacklist and the upcoming Assassin's Creed Unity. He currently works at Ubisoft Toronto (Canada).

STEPHEN LORENZO WALKES
Stephen is a freelance illustrator based in London, England. His caricatures have been used in editorials, advertising, and books. He is currently the creative director of an independent clothing company.



GEOFFREY ERNAULT
Geoffrey Ernault is currently working at Guerilla Games Cambridge as a contractor concept/visualization artist. He has been working as a concept artist for about three years now.



TATIANA KOLOBUKHOVA (SNEZNYBARS)
Tatiana is a 2D artist from Belarus. Though originally trained as a Programmer, Tatiana moved over to creating 2D art around 3.5 years ago and creates artwork for a number of different companies.

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We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, writers and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: **jess@3dtotal.com**.

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Your Magazine.

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For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

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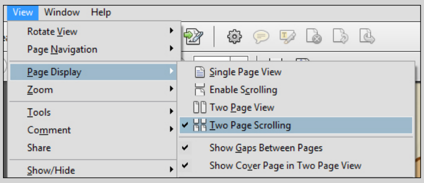
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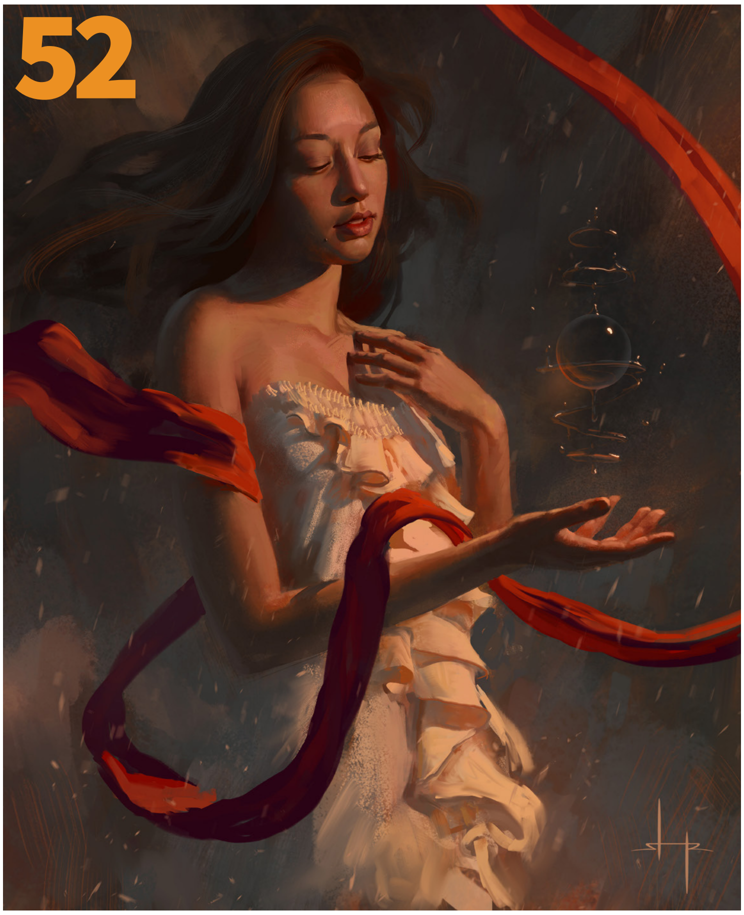

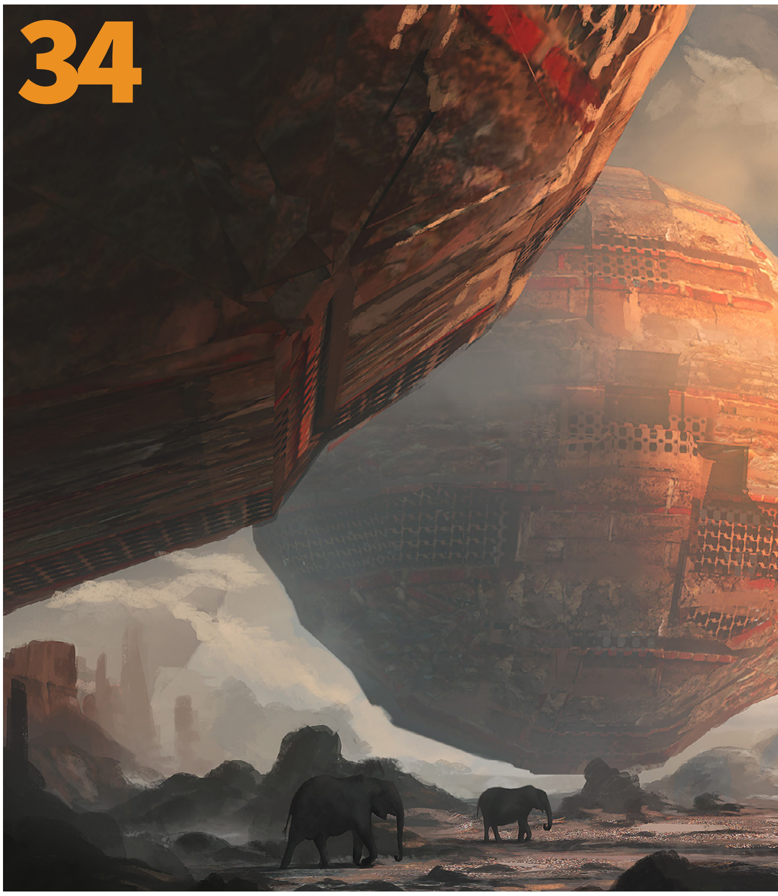

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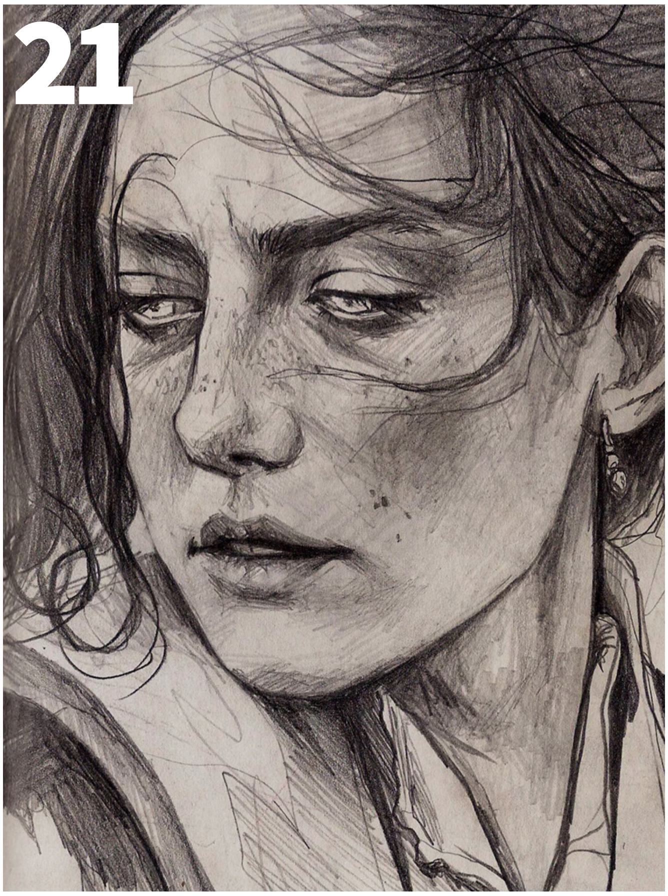
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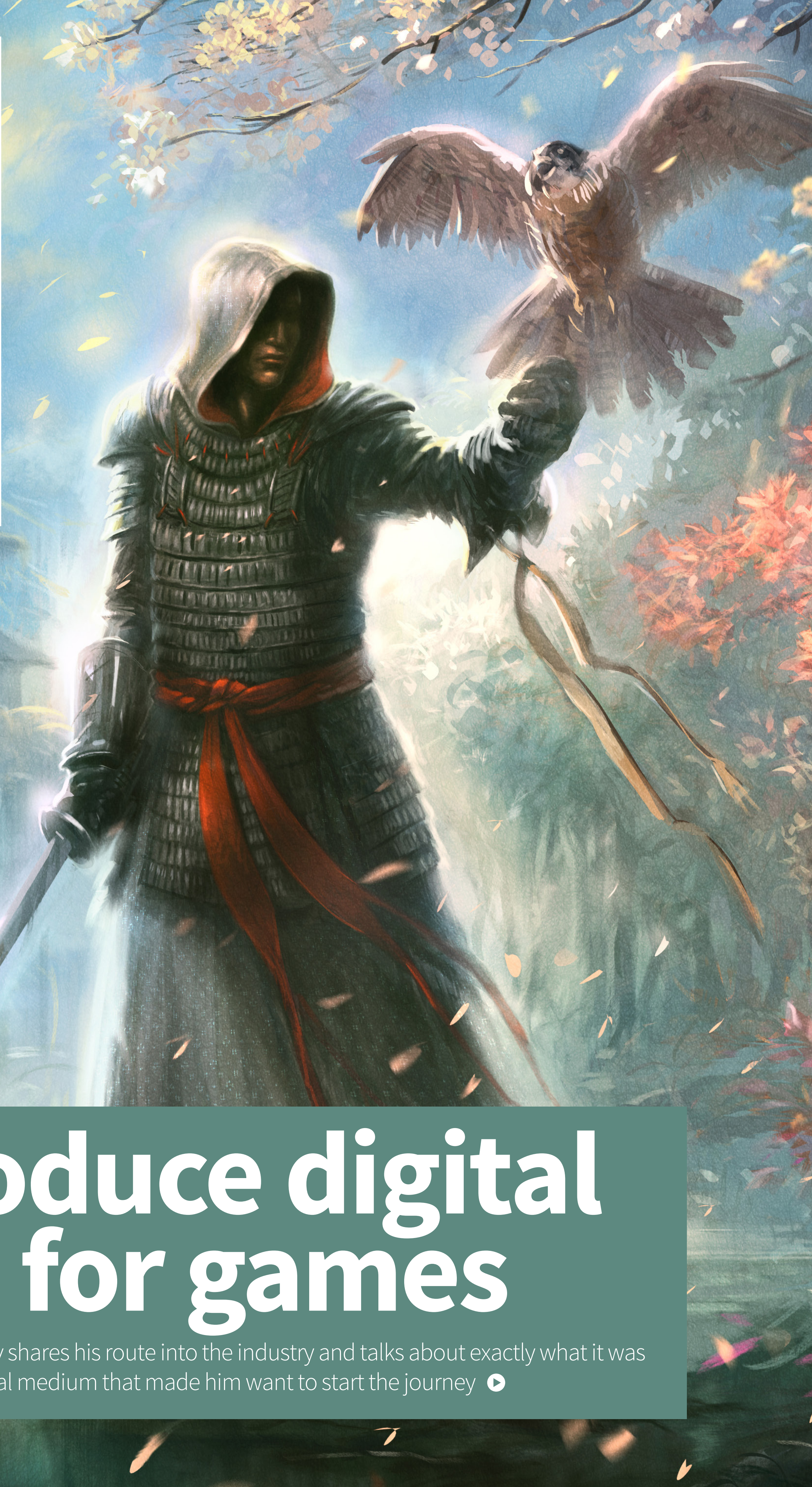
The Artist

Sabin Boykinov
sabinart.blogspot.com

Interviewed by:
Jess Serjent-Tipping

Starting as a traditional artist many, many years ago, Sabin now works as a lead concept artist at Haemimont Games studio in Sofia, Bulgaria. Besides concept work, he also makes freelance illustrations for projects like Fantasy Flight Games' *The Lord of the Rings: The Card Game*, *The Hobbit* and *Game of Thrones*.



Produce digital art for games

Sabin Boykinov shares his route into the industry and talks about exactly what it was about the digital medium that made him want to start the journey ▶

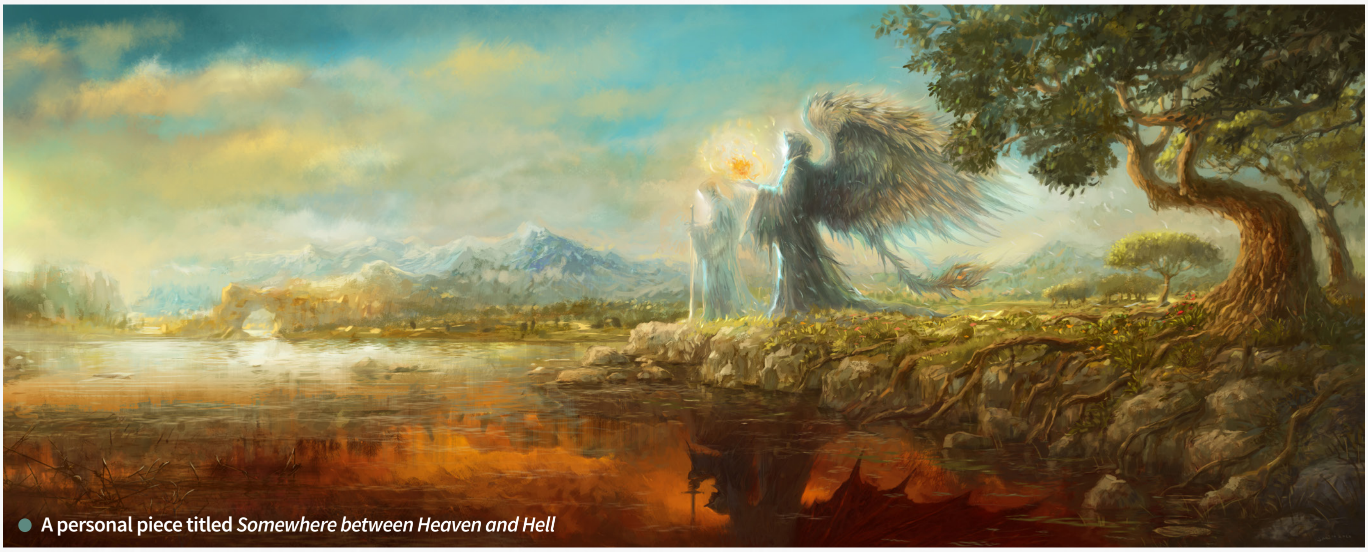
Sabin Boykinov was born in the small town of Rousse, on the Danube River in Bulgaria, and from an early age has always been drawn to visual art. This led him to spend every moment he had after school painting traditionally.

A spark was ignited the day Sabin read an interview with two Bulgarian digital artists, Svetlin Velinov and Kosta Atanasov, where they talked about their work in the game industry, and the process and techniques they use to create their digital art. Completely inspired by these two artists, Sabin went and bought himself a tablet, the Trust, which was the only one he could find in his hometown at the time! And there the journey began. He started to explore Photoshop and began the process of teaching himself (he has never attended an art academy), which he found a hard, but amazing experience!

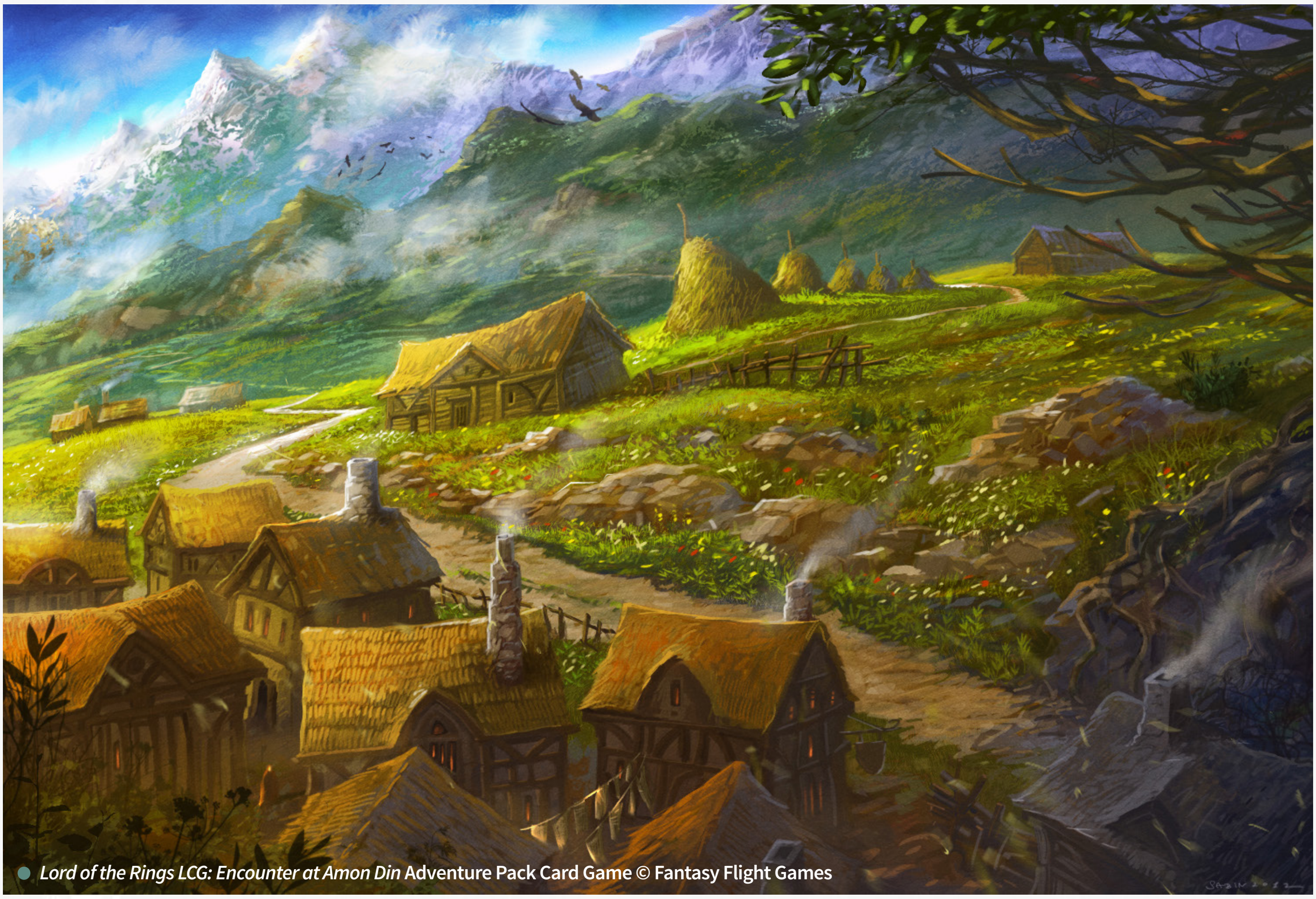
With that very tablet he produced his first tests for a game company, before making the transition into digital art, and has since worked on many titles, including the *Tropico* series, and produced freelance illustrations for board and card games. Sabin chats about his experiences and inspirations!

2dartist: What is your typical workflow? What techniques do you use?

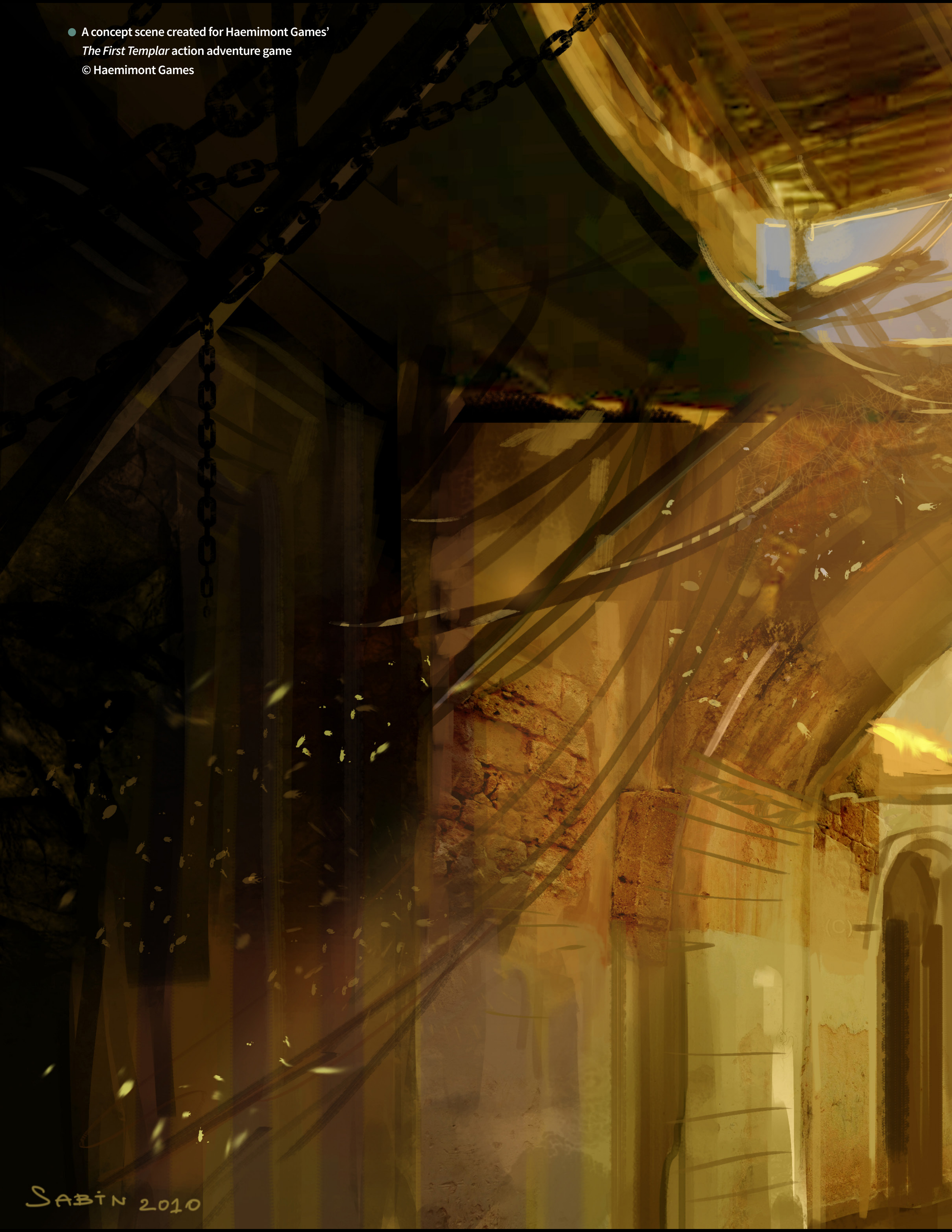
Sabin Boykinov: Usually I start with a lot of pencil sketches and a lot of research and then scan the final sketch and continue in Photoshop. I love to use custom brushes that are close to traditional ones. ▶



A personal piece titled *Somewhere between Heaven and Hell*



Lord of the Rings LCG: Encounter at Amon Din Adventure Pack Card Game © Fantasy Flight Games



A concept scene created for Haemimont Games'
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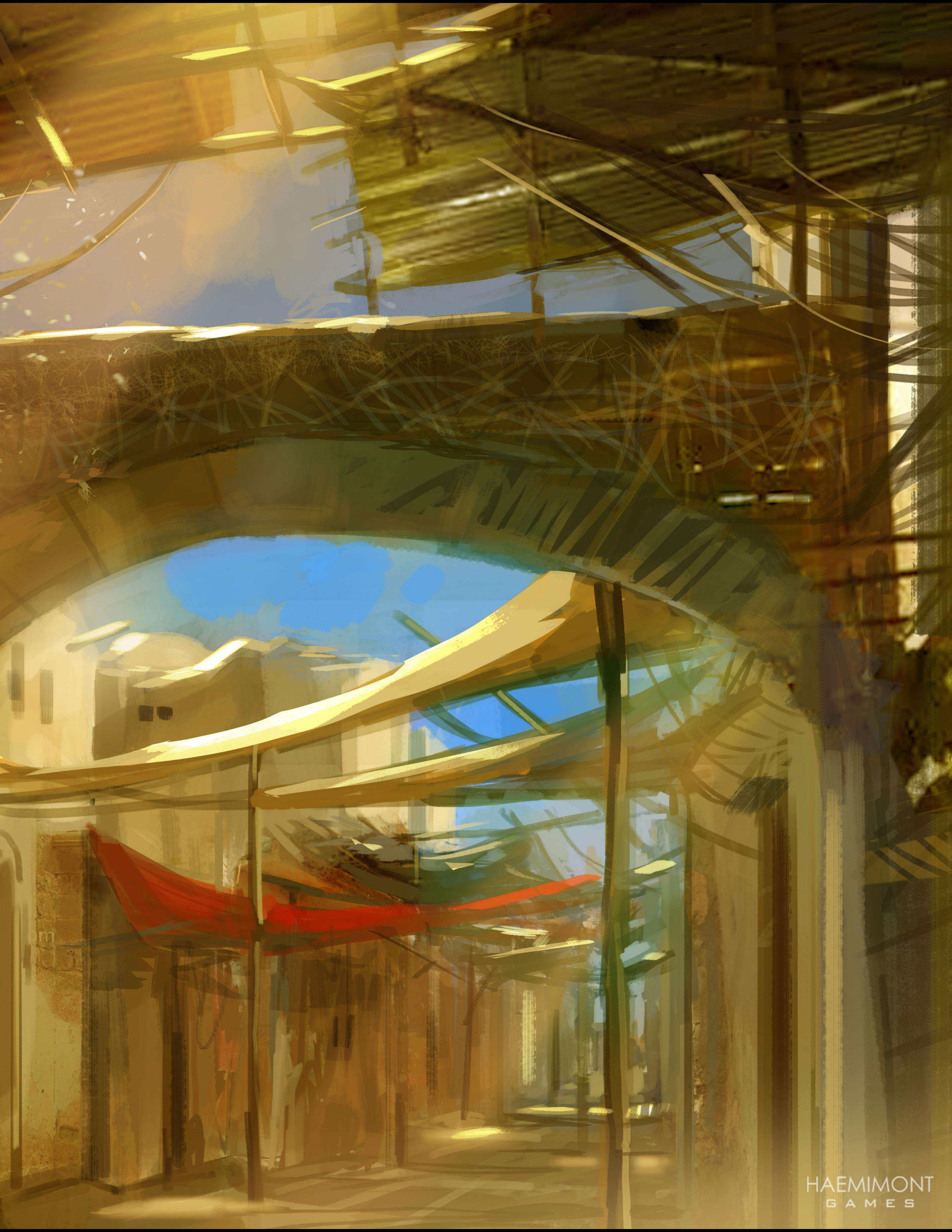
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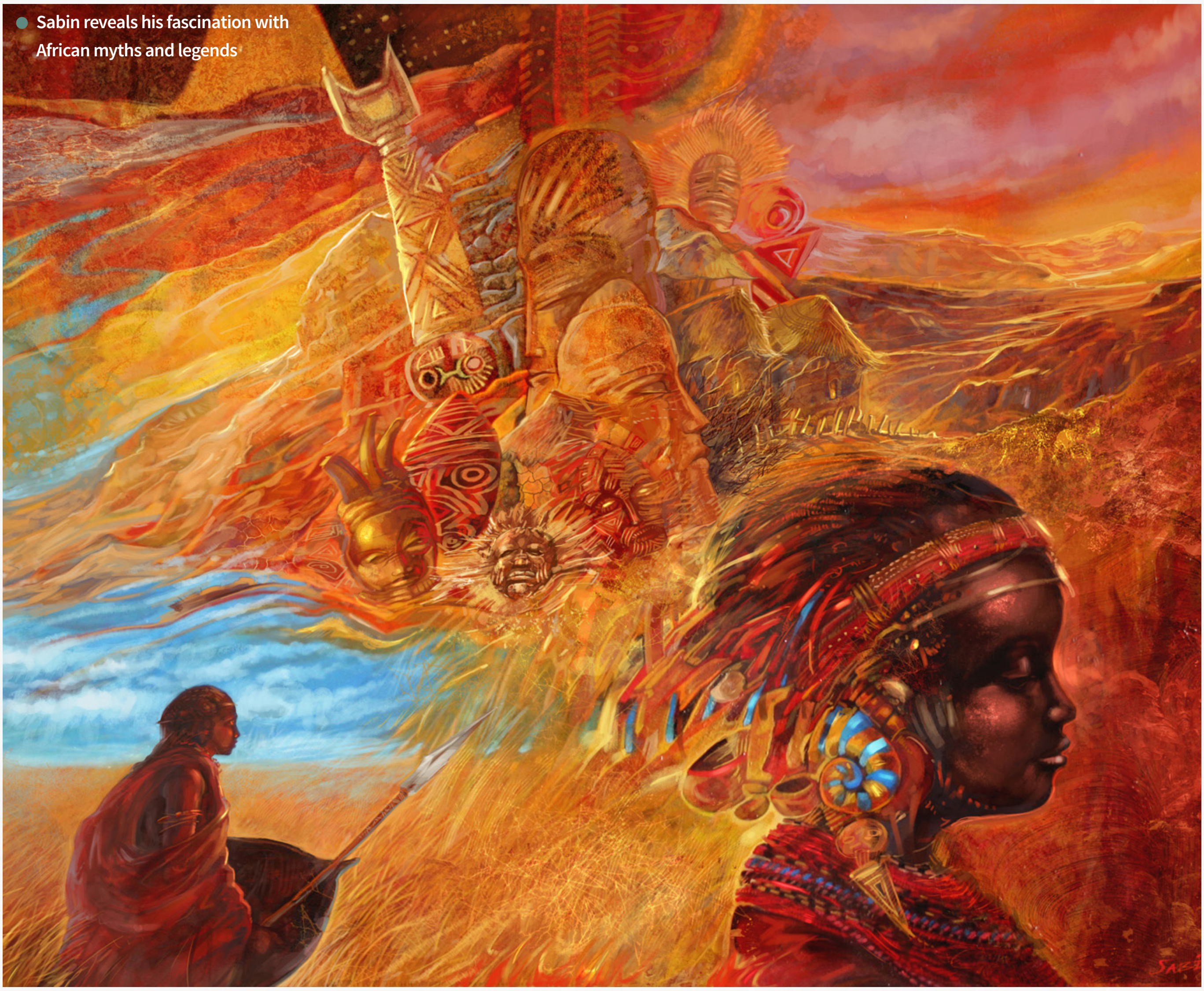


Sabin reveals his fascination with African myths and legends

2da: Where do you draw your inspirations from for your work?

SB: I find my inspiration in everything – looking at nature, reading books or watching nice movies. It depends on the project you are involved in.

> **"I think it is important to show your work as much as you can – this inspires you and is a chance to see if you are on the right path"**

2da: What was it about the digital tools that made you want to pursue a career in the industry?

SB: I really love to use a Wacom Cintiq because it is closer to a traditional work experience. You can do many things faster than traditional methods. Working in the game industry is great because of the artistic freedom and the variety of projects.

2da: How do you keep your portfolio up to date? Any tips?

SB: I try to post my weekly sketches on my Facebook page and Instagram. Keeping a blog is also good. I think it is important to show your work as much as you can – this inspires you and is a chance to see if you are on the right path.

2da: Who are your favorite artists and why?

SB: The artist who provoked my imagination first and inspired me for many years is the visionary master Mati Klarwein.

I have many favorite artists from the game industry now. I learned a lot from them, though it would be difficult to list all their names here.

2da: What has been your favorite project to work on to date and why?

SB: The SUBSTRATA book project was great because I learned a lot and shared ideas with amazing artists form the industry. ▶

PRO TIPS

Sketches

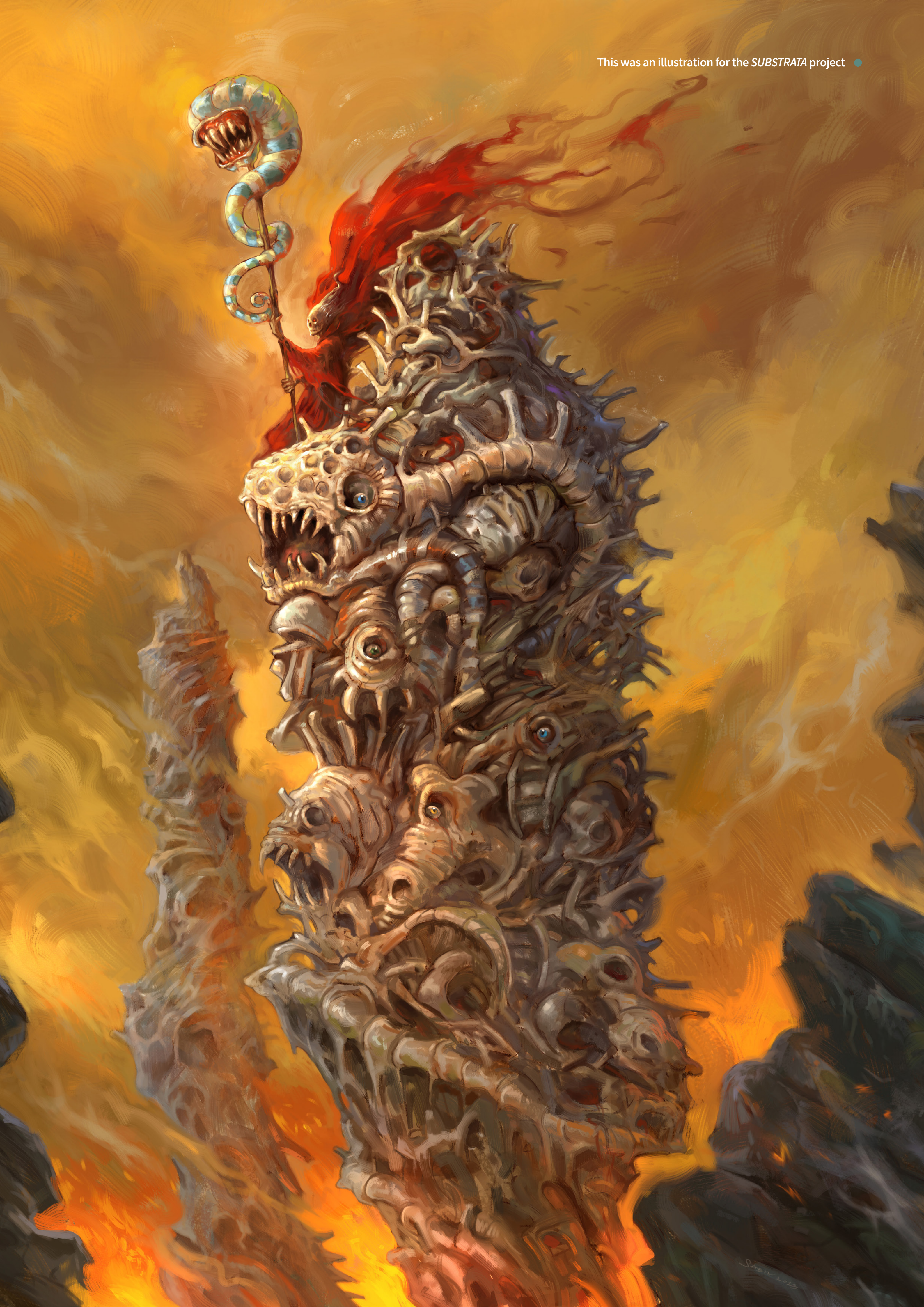
Making as many sketches as possible will give you a chance to create better ideas and designs.

Explore different techniques

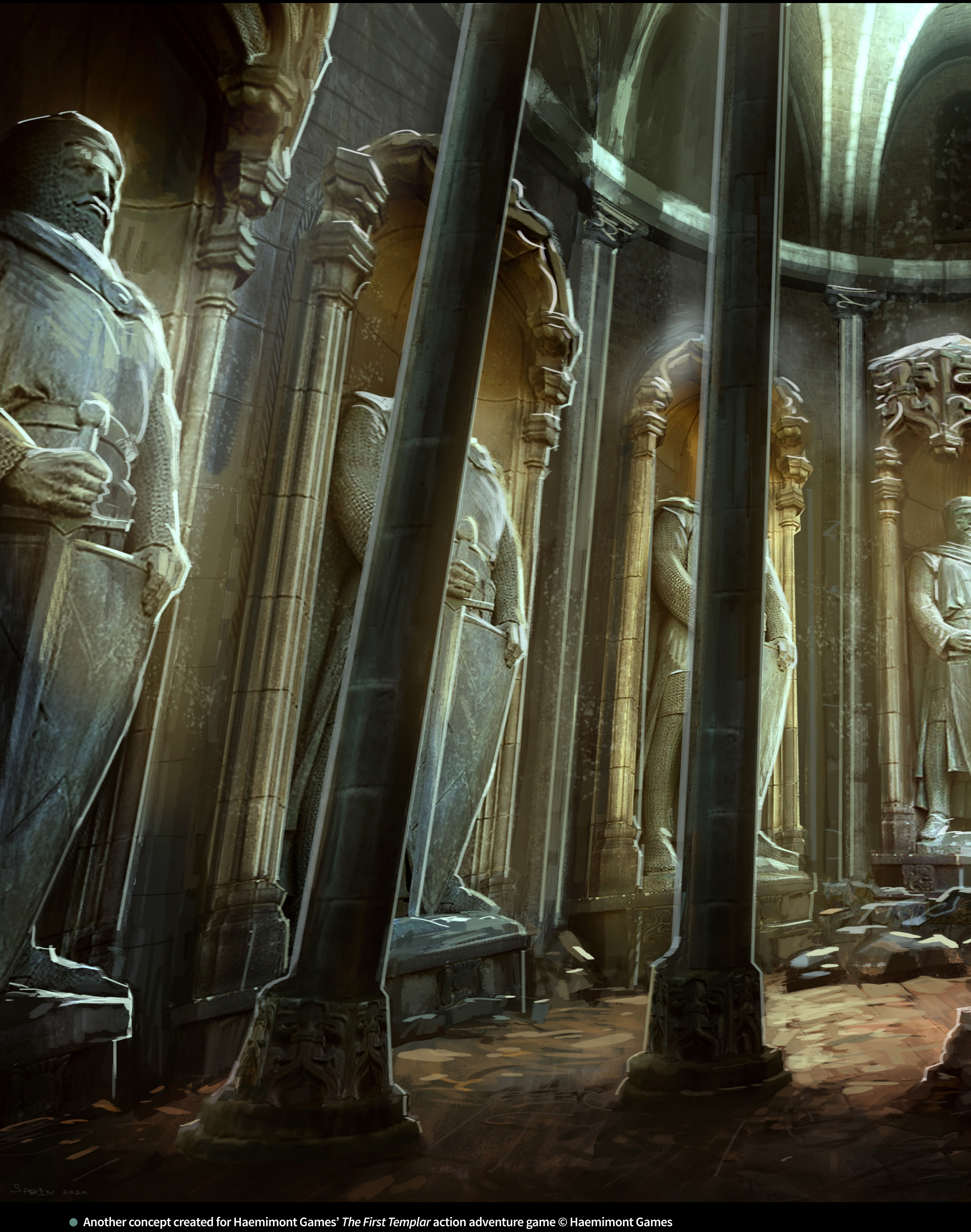
Try to explore different art techniques, use different brushes and explore old masters' paintings. Try to start a new concepts or illustration with a different approach to your typical one.

If you want to make games, play games!

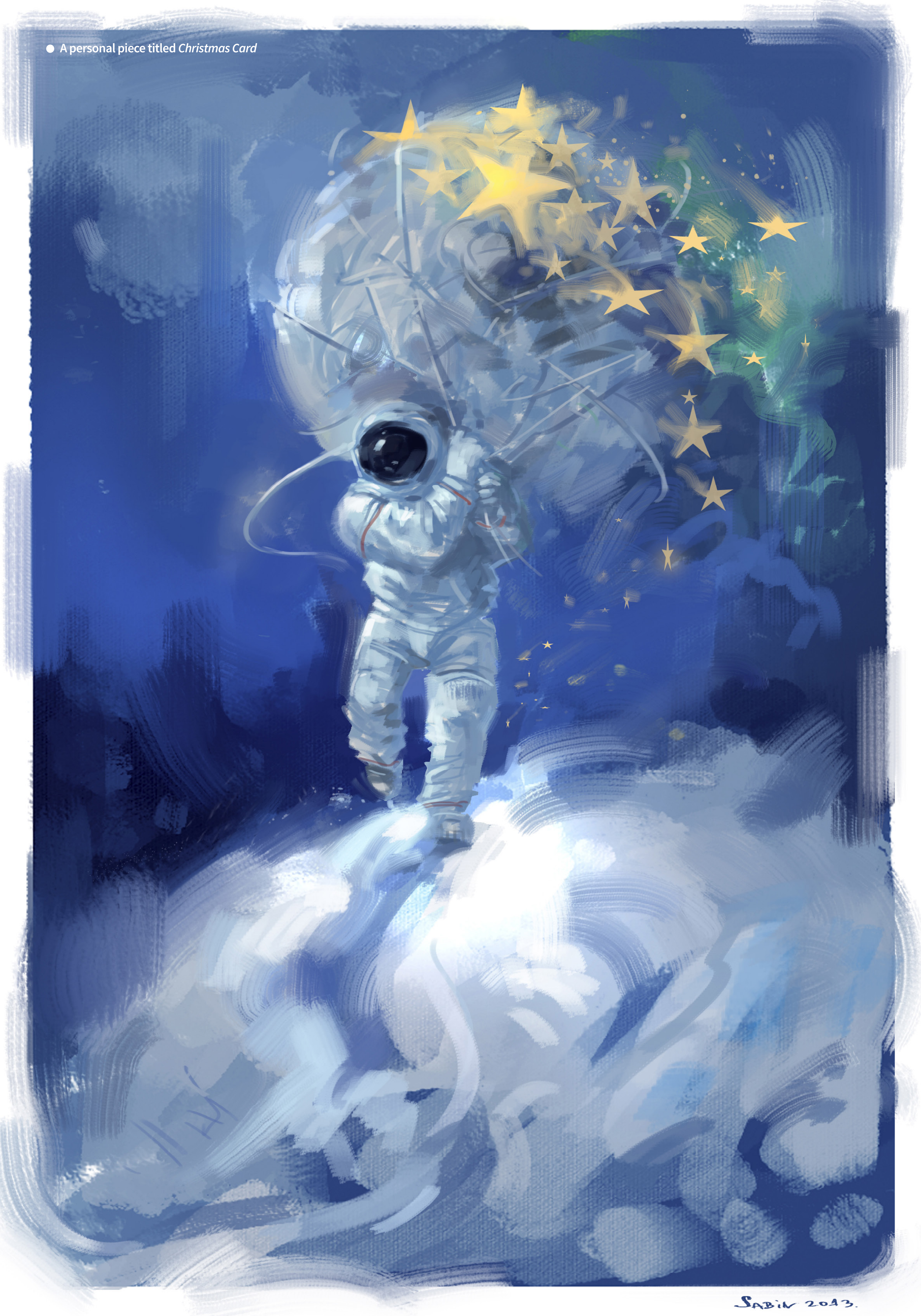
Explore your favourite titles by playing them, then try to understand how the world of the game is created and find inspiration from the details.



This was an illustration for the *SUBSTRATA* project



Another concept created for Haemimont Games' *The First Templar* action adventure game © Haemimont Games



- A personal piece titled *Christmas Card*

Sabin's studio

Artist history

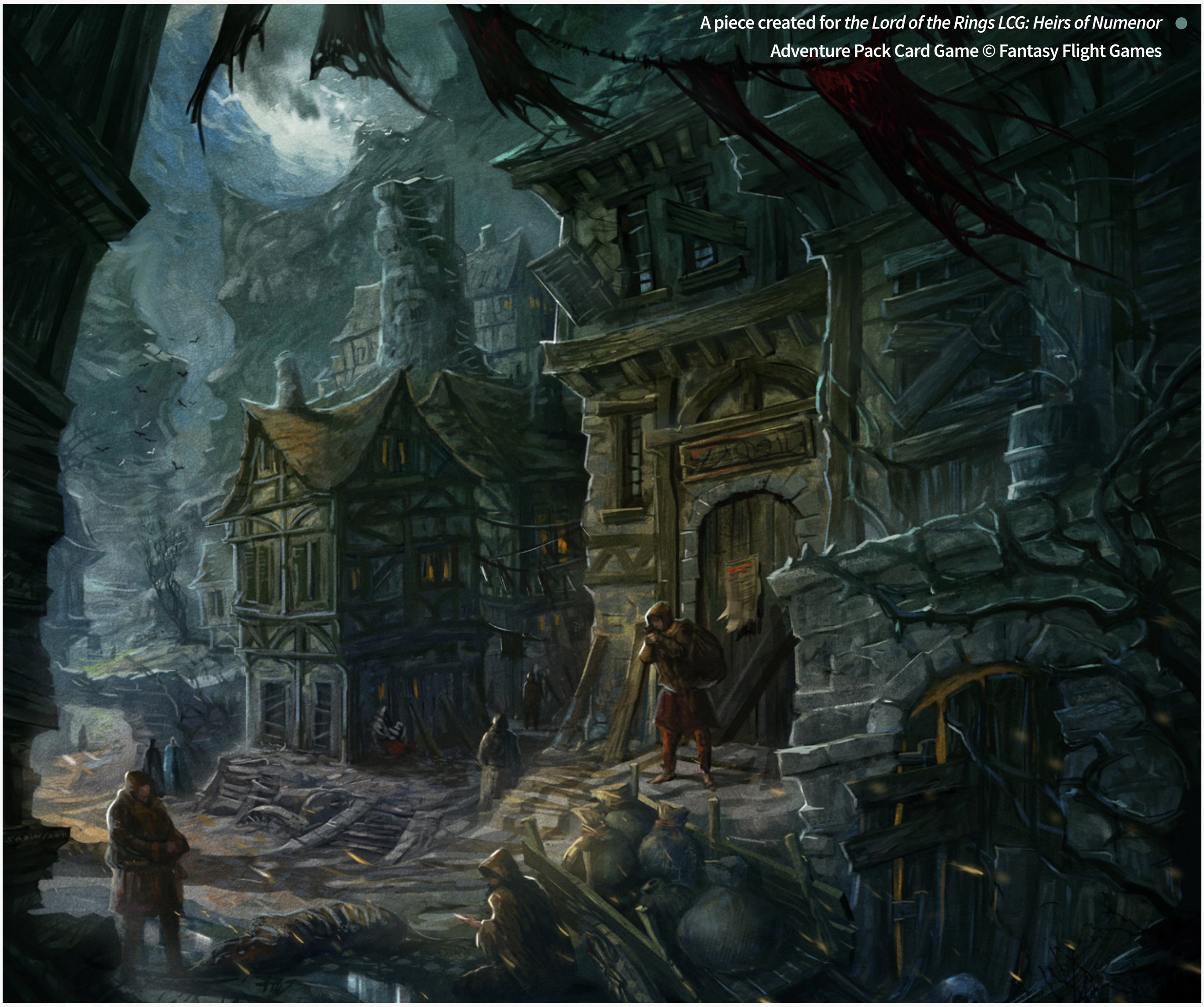
Sabin Boykinov's career up to this point...

2007: Sabin started working in the game industry and slowly transitioned over to digital art. This is when he made his first illustrations on a PC

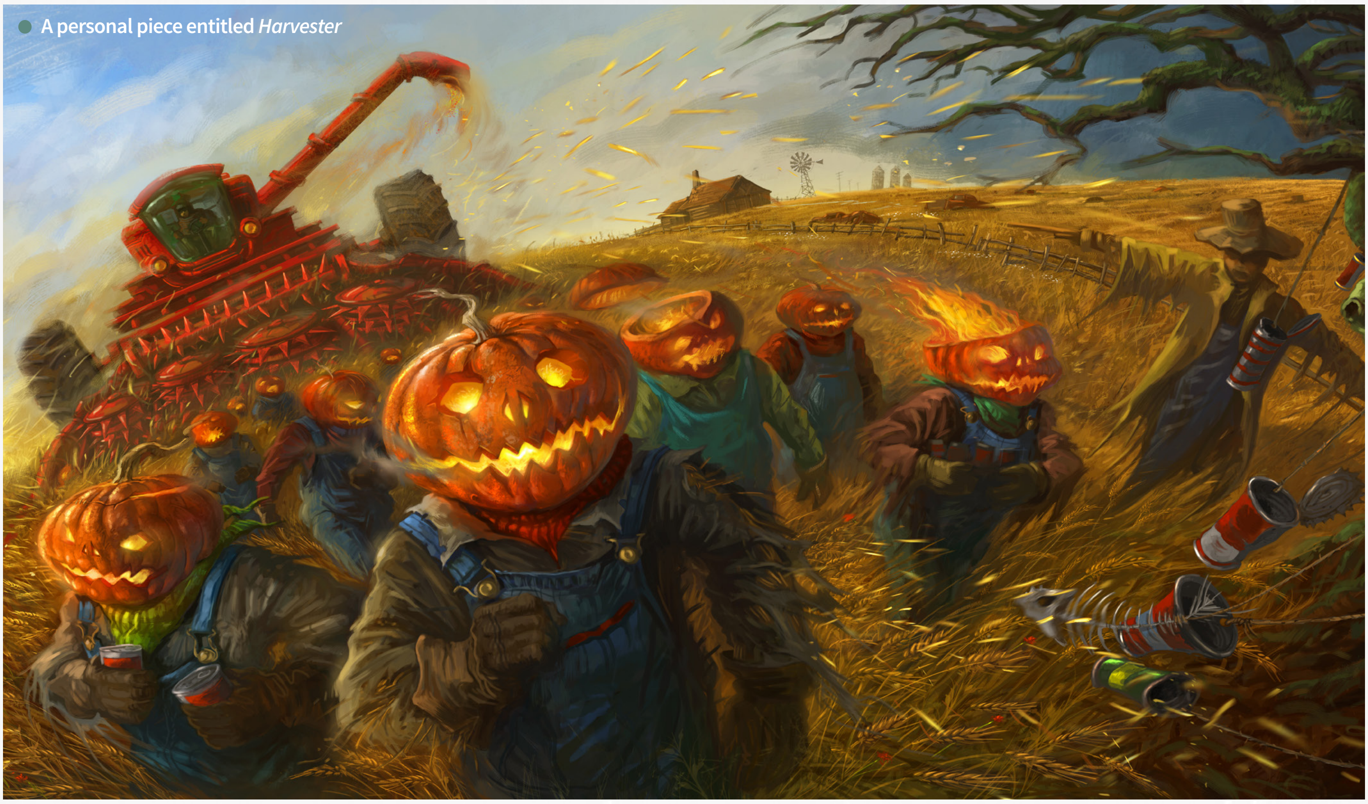
2012: Aside from concept artwork, Sabin started making freelance illustrations for board game companies. He reveals that working on cards for titles like *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* was really inspirational

2013: Sabin also started working traditionally again after so many years, showcasing his work in *2dartist*

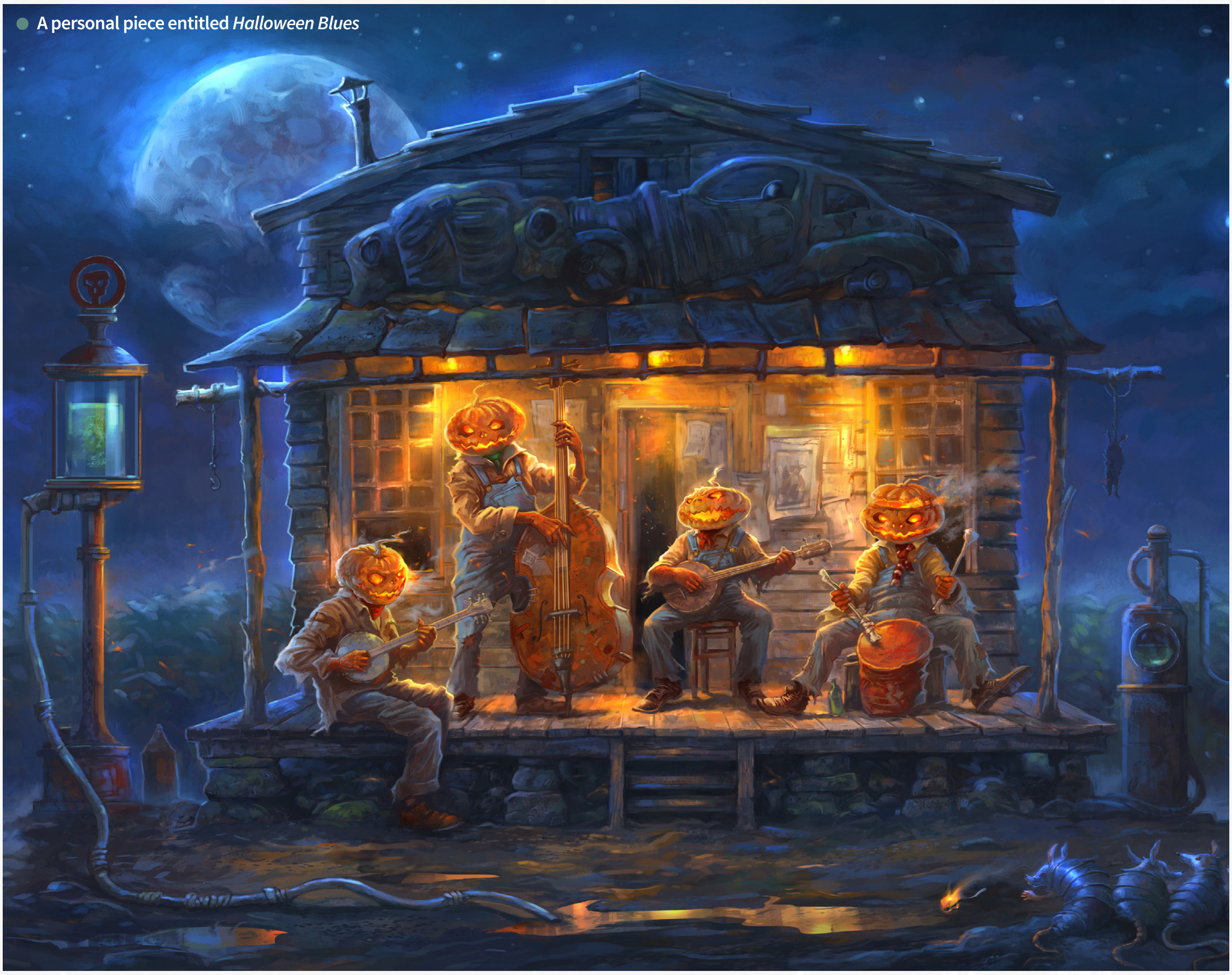
2013: Sabin became part of Paul Richards' book project *SUBSTRATA*. The book will be released very soon in July



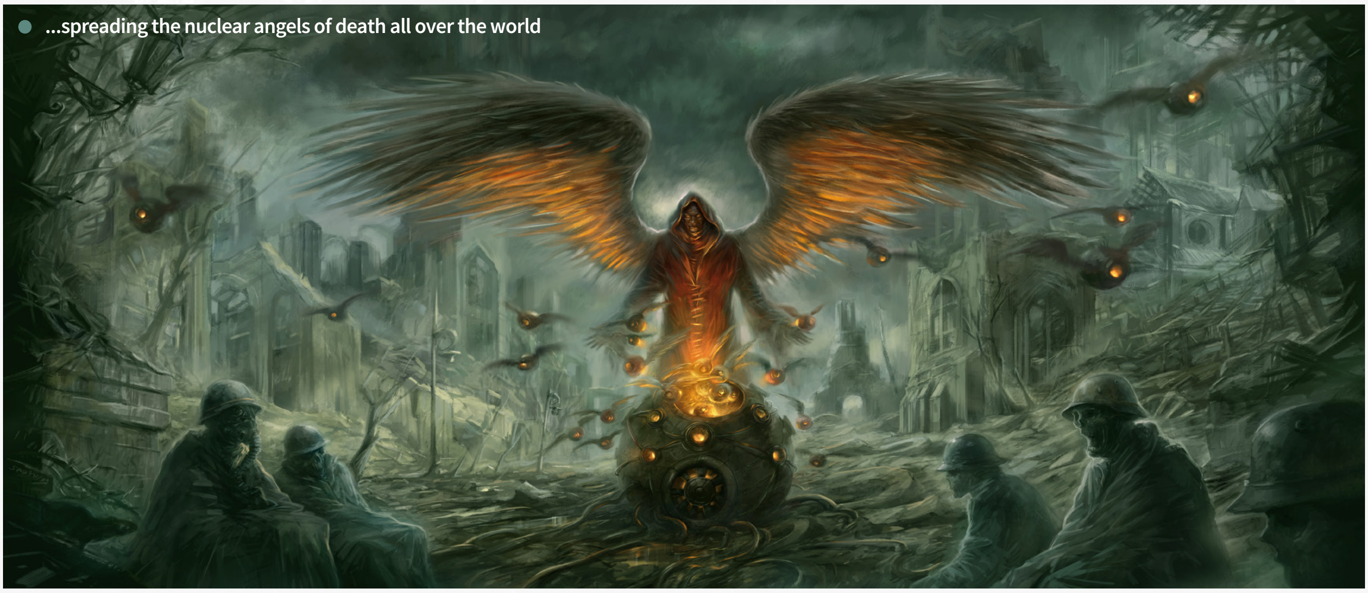
A piece created for *the Lord of the Rings LCG: Heirs of Numenor* Adventure Pack Card Game © Fantasy Flight Games



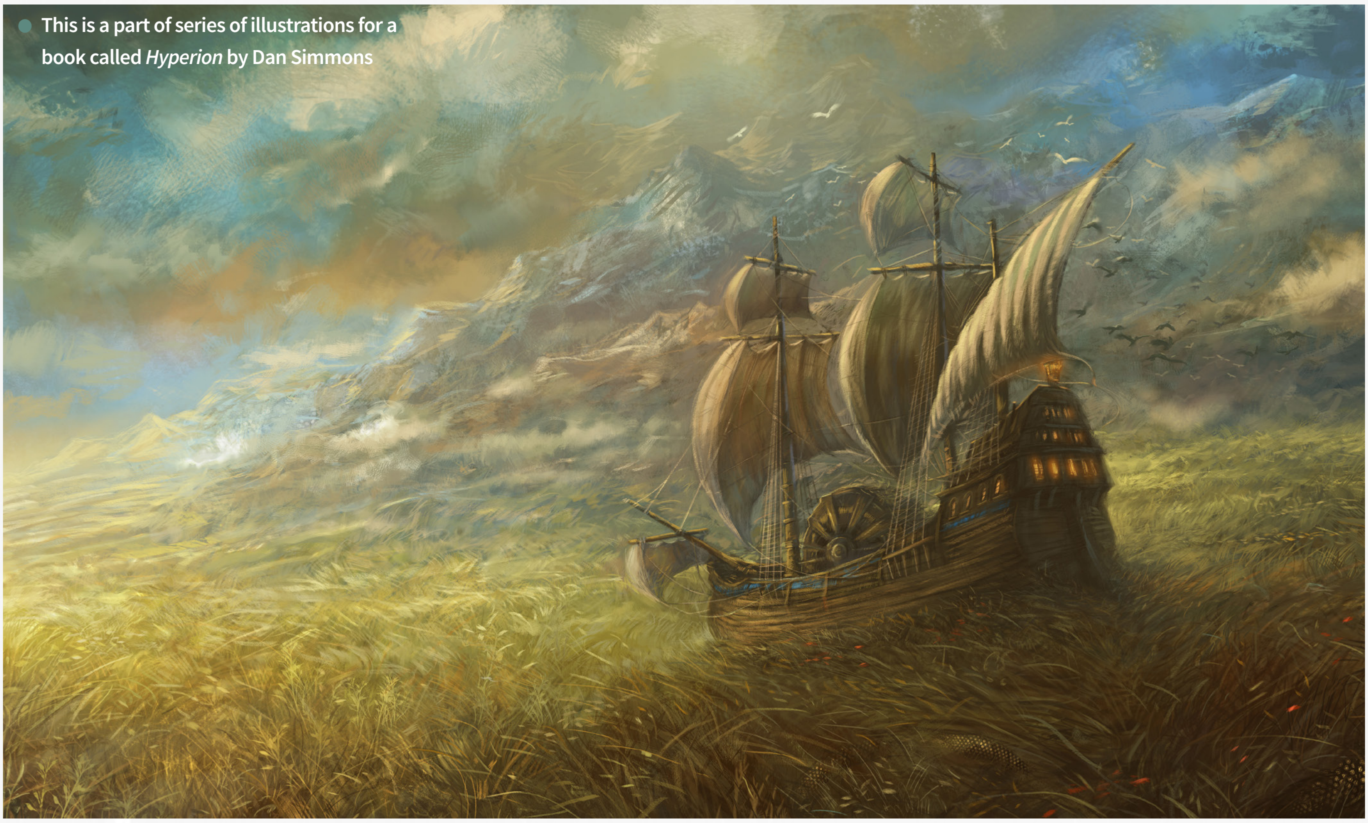
A personal piece entitled *Harvester*



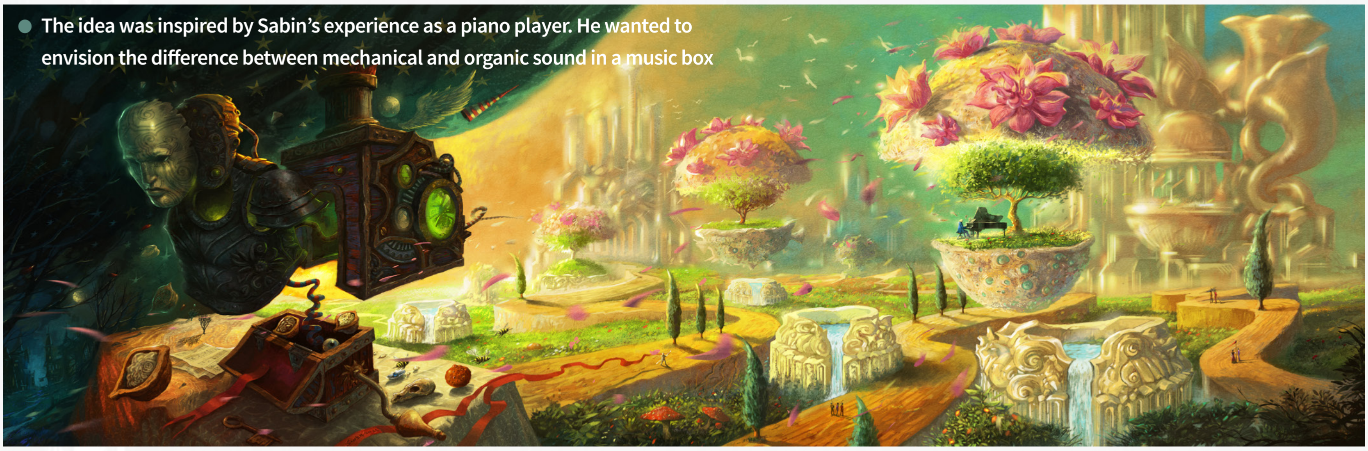
A personal piece entitled *Halloween Blues*



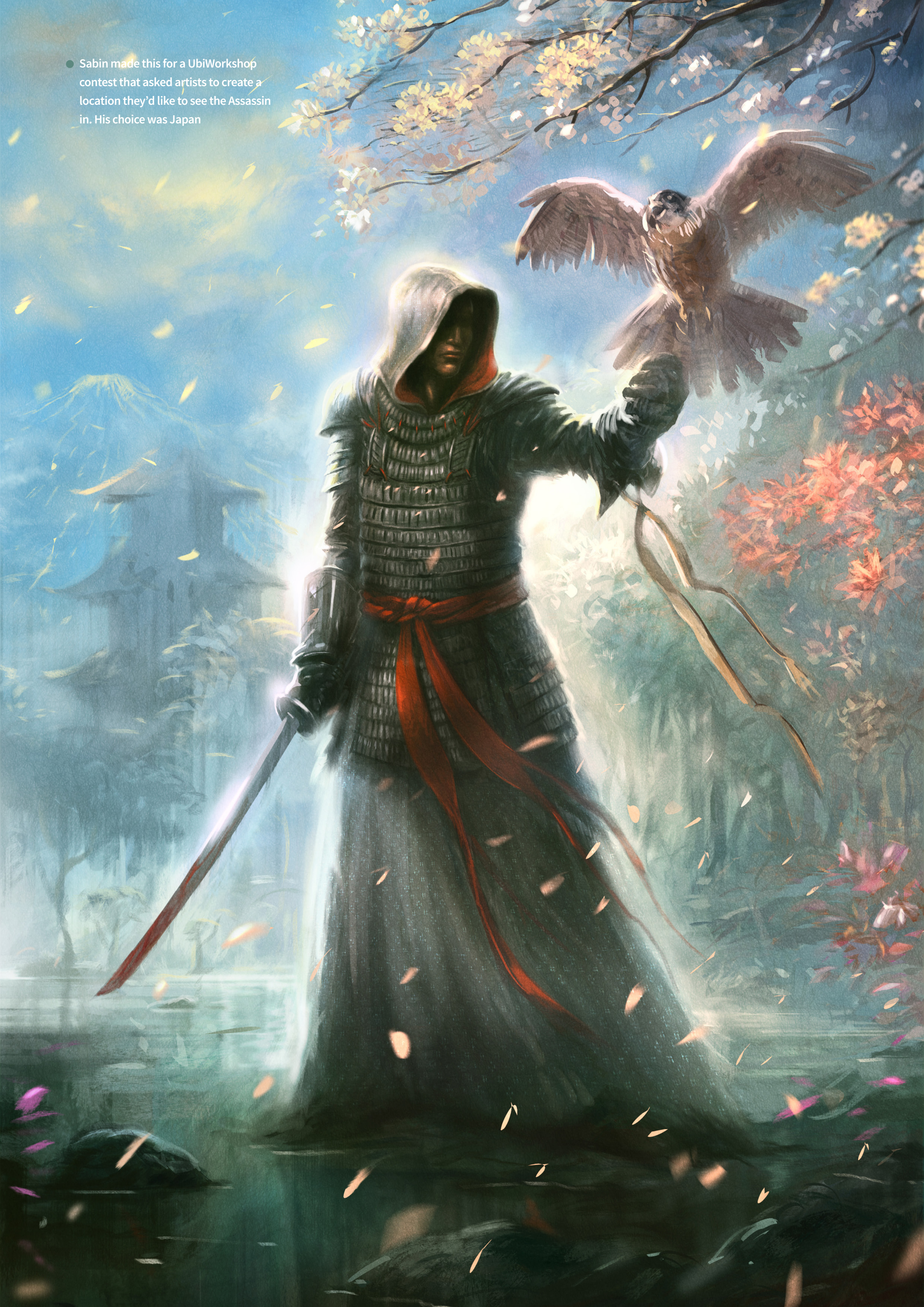
...spreading the nuclear angels of death all over the world



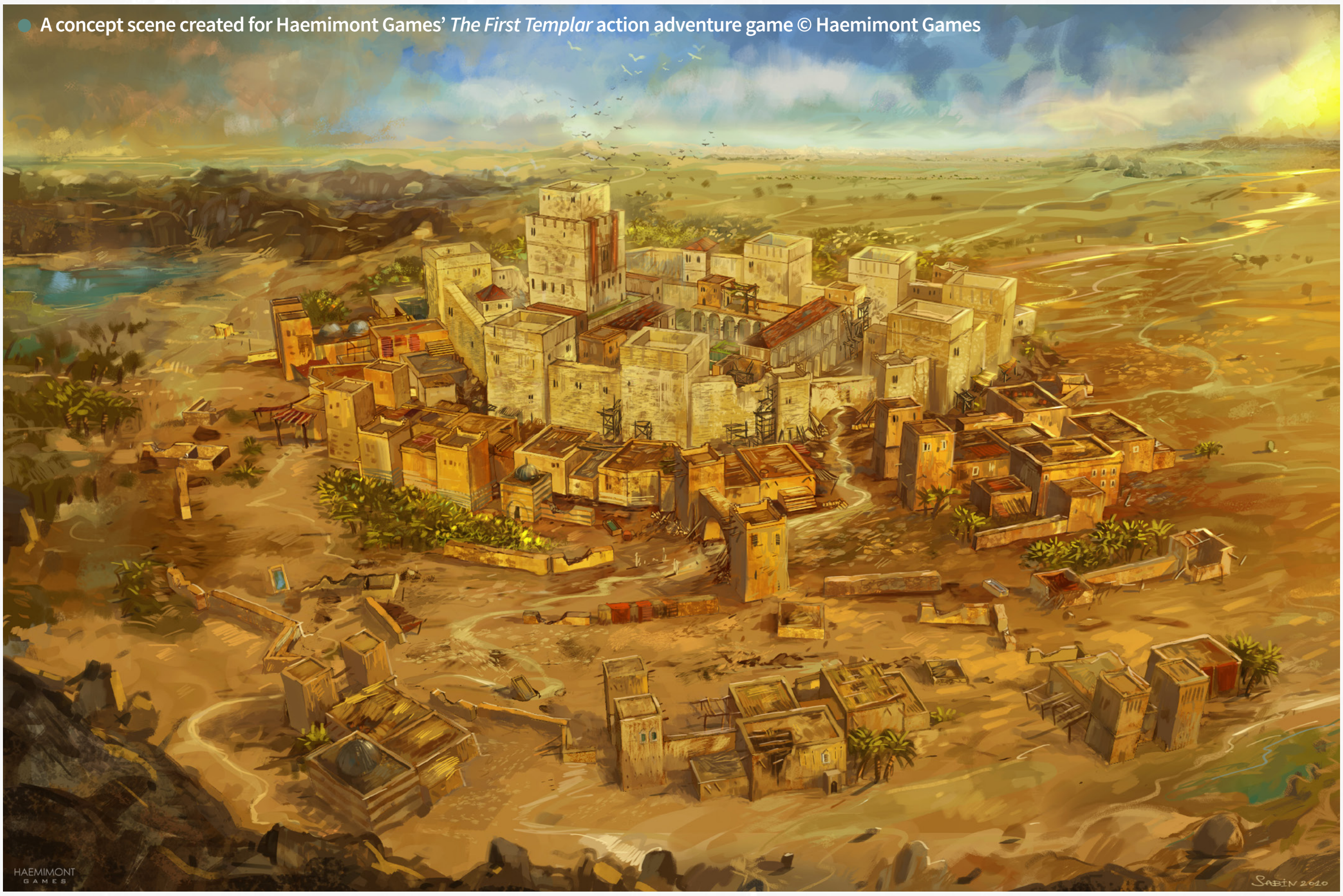
This is a part of series of illustrations for a book called *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons



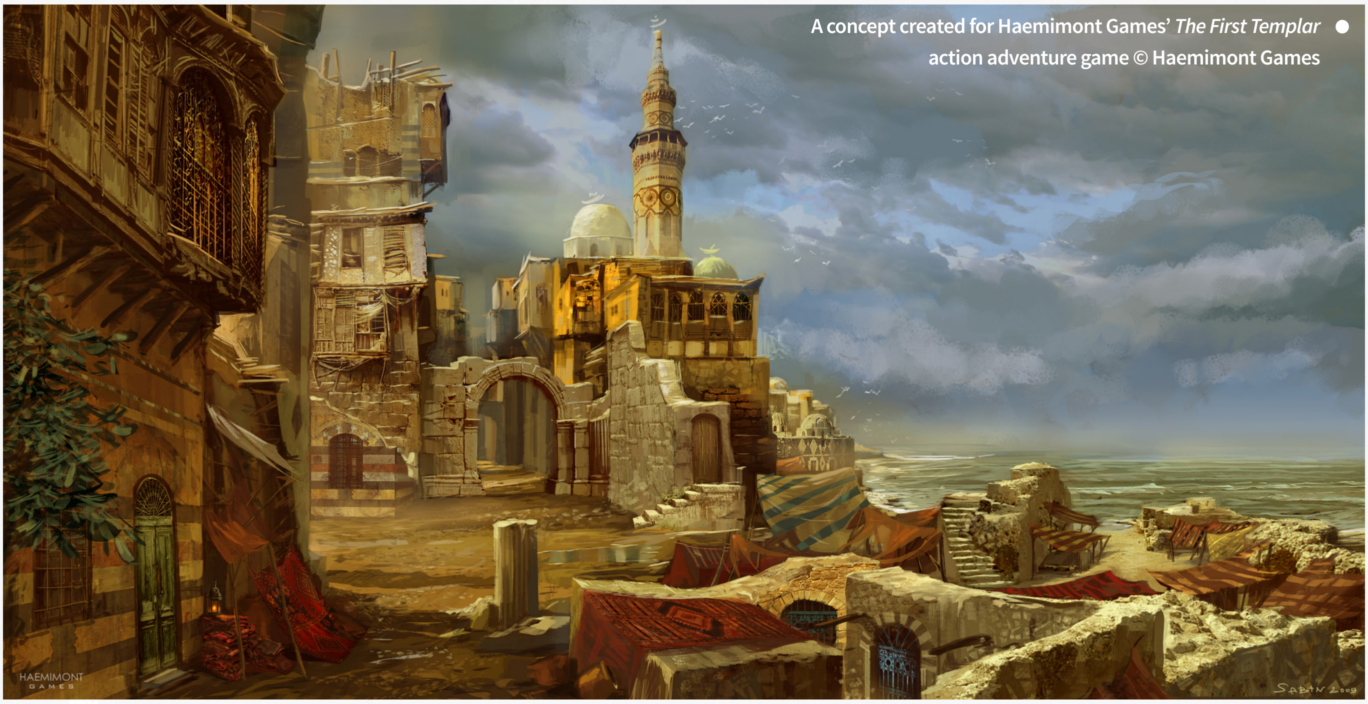
The idea was inspired by Sabin's experience as a piano player. He wanted to envision the difference between mechanical and organic sound in a music box



- Sabin made this for a UbiWorkshop contest that asked artists to create a location they'd like to see the Assassin in. His choice was Japan



A concept scene created for Haemimont Games' *The First Templar* action adventure game © Haemimont Games



A concept created for Haemimont Games' *The First Templar* action adventure game © Haemimont Games

2da: Can you tell us what you're currently working on at the moment?

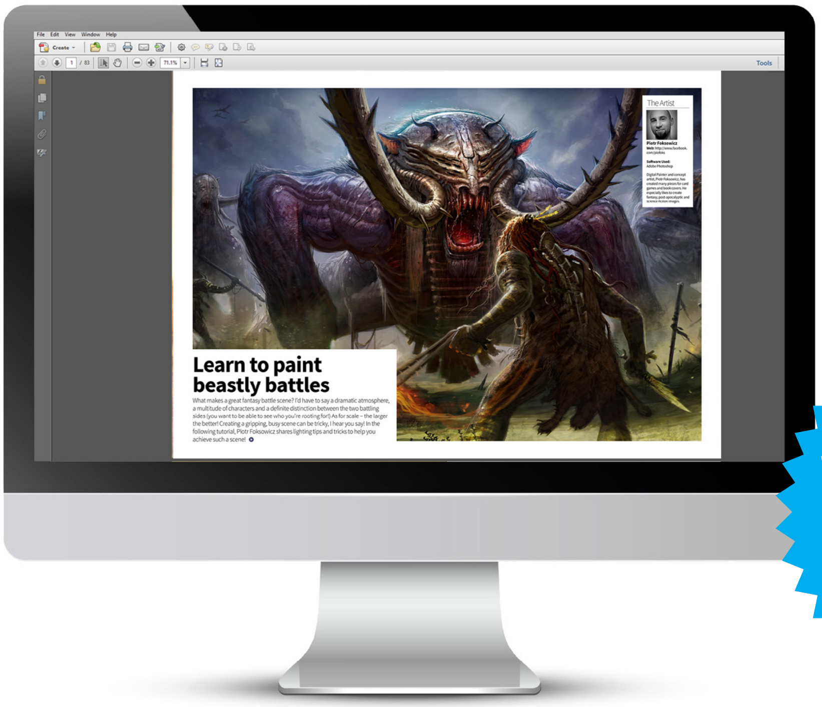
SB: Our studio currently finished work on *Tropico 5* and it will be on the market this month.

2da: What advice do you have for aspiring artists who want to make it in the industry?

SB: First, to have a lot of patience and passion for what they do, whether it is painting, drawing or playing games! Be like a child and explore everything to find inspiration.

2da: Finally, what can we expect to see from you in the future?

SB: I have a lot of plans and ideas for future works – I hope to be able to share them soon! ●



Learn to paint beastly battles

What makes a great fantasy battle scene? I'd have to say a dramatic atmosphere, a multitude of characters and a definite distinction between the two battling sides (you want to be able to see who you're rooting for!) As for scale – the larger the better! Creating a gripping, busy scene can be tricky, I hear you say! In the following tutorial, Piotr Foksowicz shares lighting tips and tricks to help you achieve such a scene!

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"A great source of inspiration and tips on how to improve your skills and speed up your painting process. Besides very detailed step-by-step tutorials, 2dartist magazine will also ensure there are a large variety of topics covered as well."

- Blaz Porenta, illustrator

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FERNANDA SUAREZ

Sketchbook

From geometric shapes to organic forms, Fernanda Suarez shares the ideas and inspiration behind her female filled sketchbook.

The Artist

Fernanda Suarez
fernandasuarez.
carbonmade.com

Fernanda Suarez is a freelance illustrator and concept artist. Fernanda is currently working on artwork for a new board game by the company Plaid Hat Games, makes Illustrations for Paizo Publishing, and commissions for private clients.

Discover the flowing lines in Fernanda Suarez's sketchbook...

I love drawing in my sketchbook – it relaxes me. It's a moment when I can do things just for myself, so in a way I feel more freedom when I sketch. It's also a great moment to develop ideas that I can use later in a painting.

There is something in drawing with a pencil on paper, that I can't get with digital work. I love how you can describe so much just with a line and its different weights and pressure. I think there is something just very raw and honest about sketching with paper – there is no Ctrl+Z function, it's just what comes out naturally.

Inspiration and ideas

My inspiration a lot of the time is music. I sit down and just listen to music, and from there I start sketching and the idea for the drawings come out of the feeling I get from the music I am listening to. Apart from that, it's pretty much everything that I am in contact with – movies, books, fashion, references, people – anything can be inspiring.

Materials

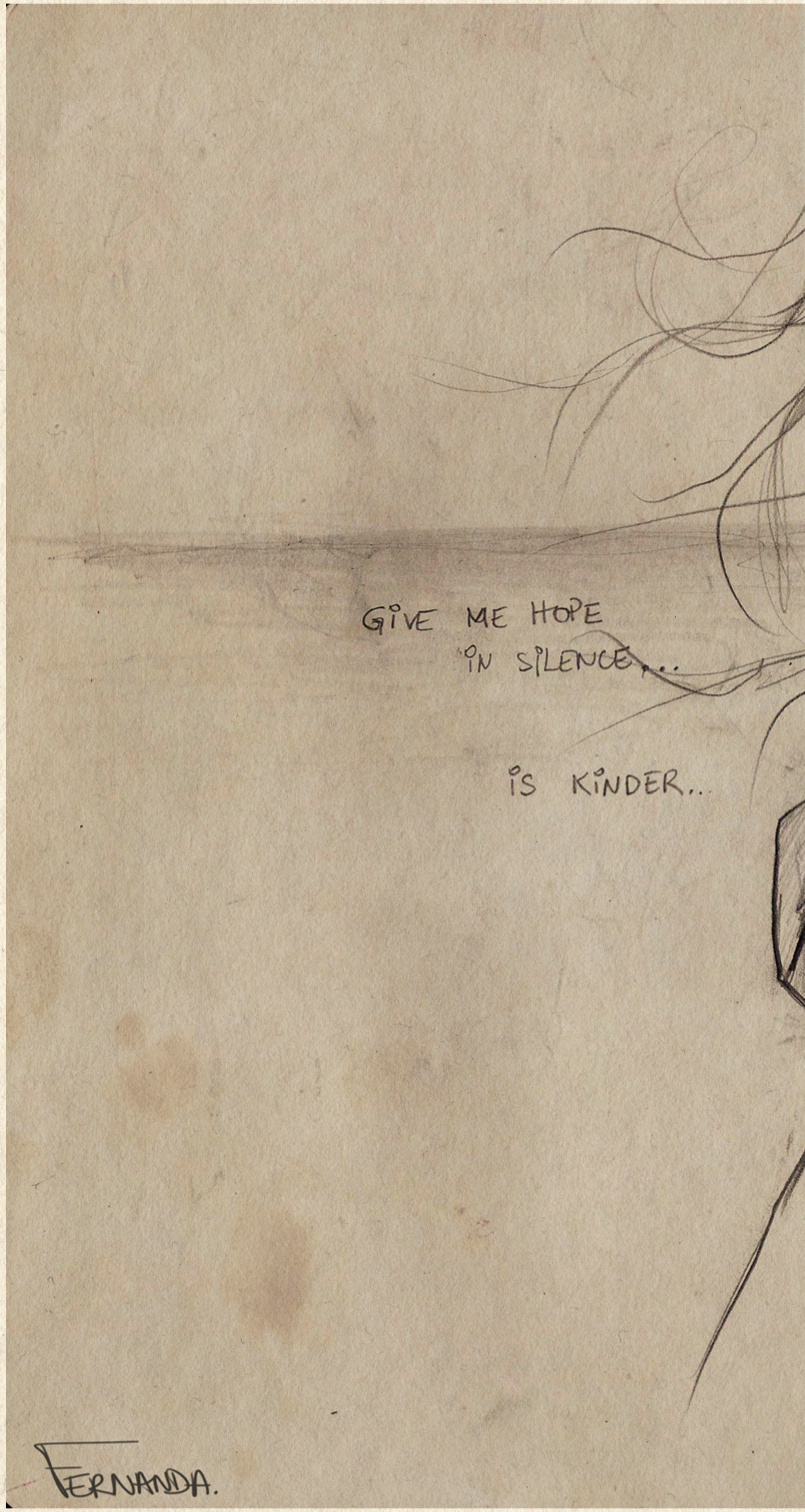
I use a Moleskin notebook with a soft cover; it's really comfortable for me as the paper is very soft with almost no texture.

I draw with Graphite pencils (2B, 3B, 4B and so on), and also a mechanical pencil (0.5), and a regular eraser.

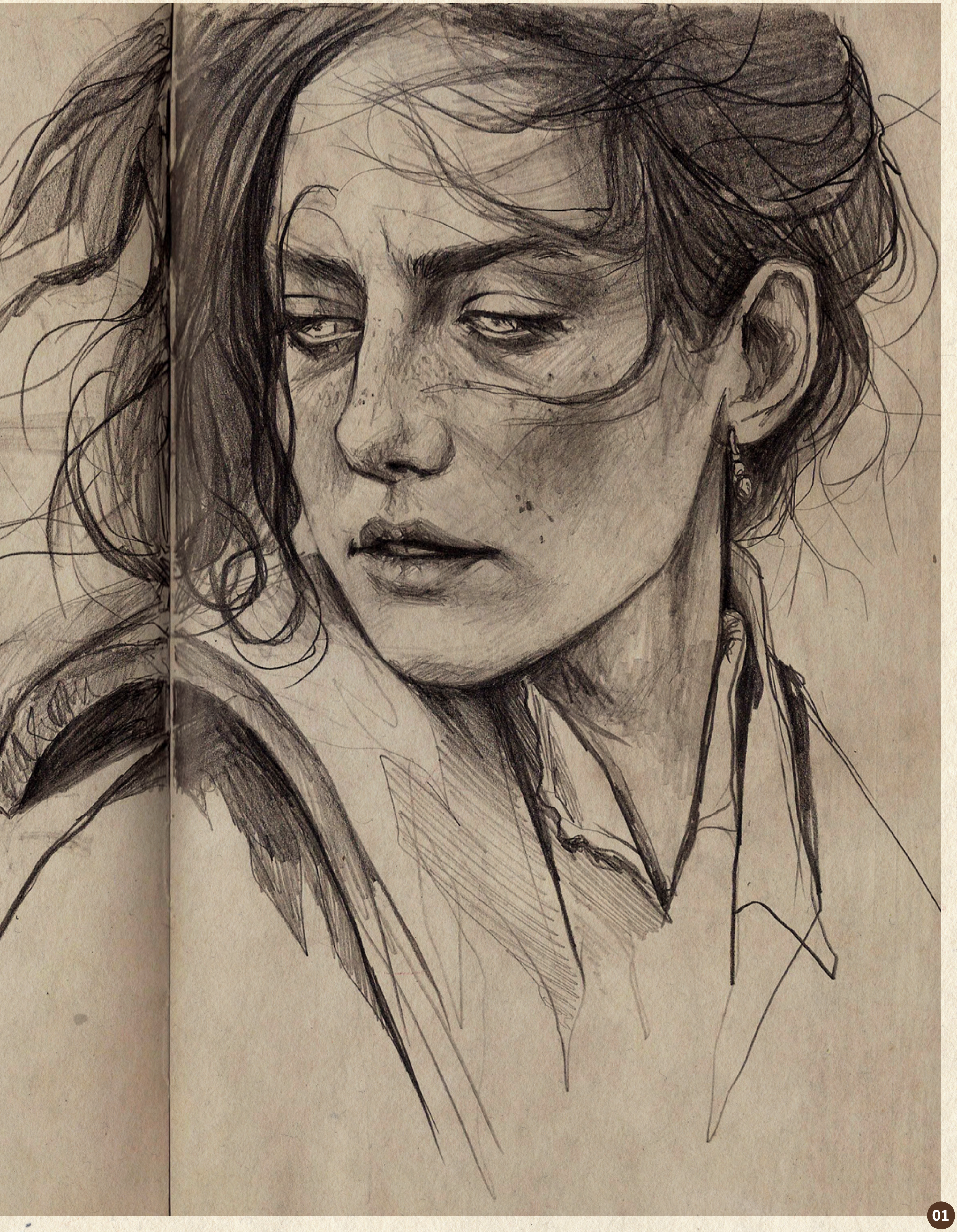
Sketching techniques

I don't think that when you sketch you are conscious of a technique. As I mentioned before, sketching on paper is something that is very raw, and the way you do it is something that comes naturally, so the technique is not something you think about it when doing it (at least in my case). When I sketch, what comes out is something created almost unconsciously.

I do like to do cross-hatching for shadows, but I mix that with smoother work too. I like to develop volumes on a figure using very geometric forms. I like to start with simple shapes to get the basic form and proportions, and from there work on a more organic look. I like to leave all my lines and traces on view too, so you can see the skeleton of the drawing in a way.


GIVE ME HOPE
IN SILENCE...
IS KINDER..
FERNANDA.

01 Portrait from the movie *Wuthering Heights* © Fernanda Suarez



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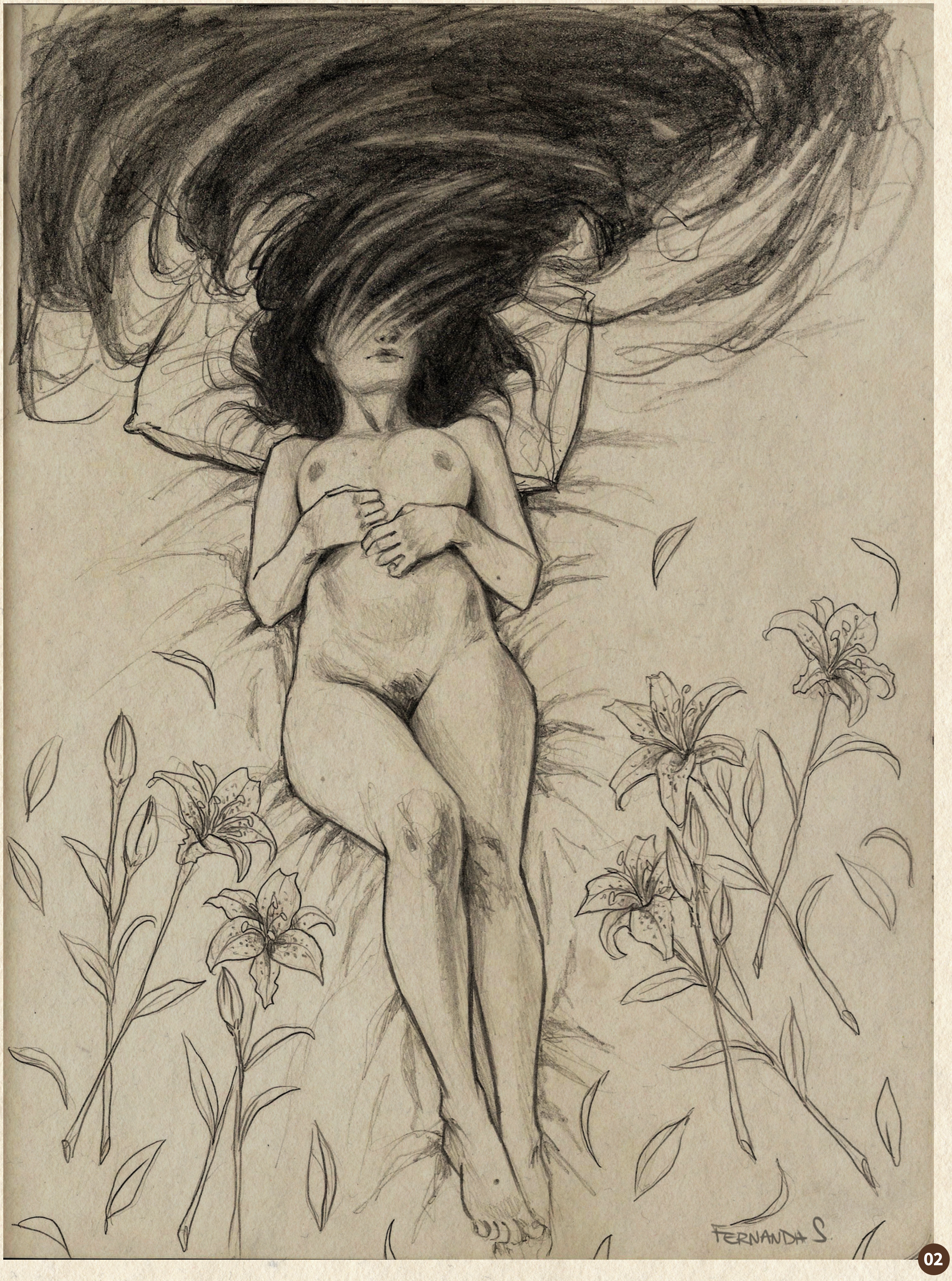

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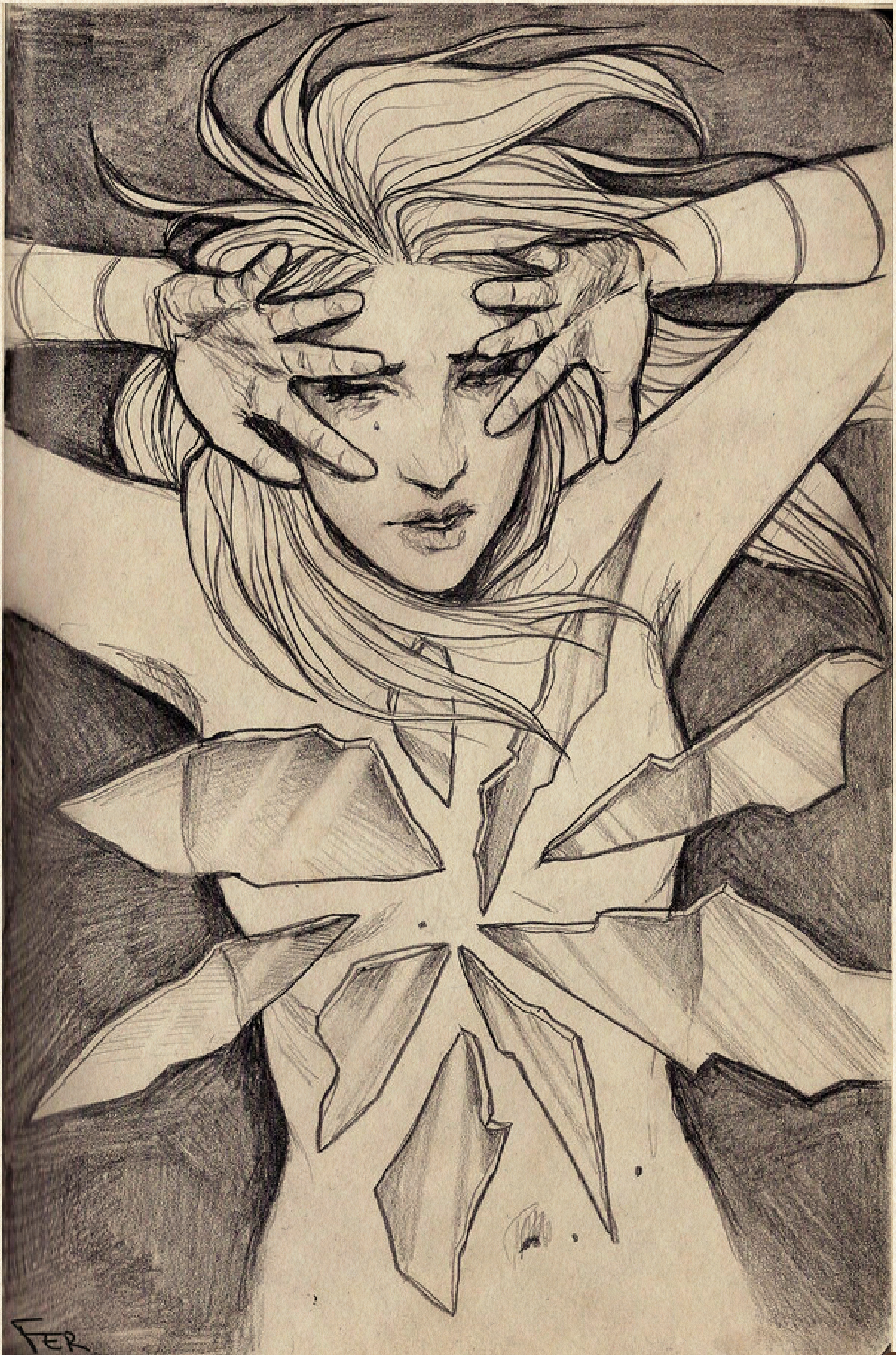
02 There is never rest from the tragedy of life and love
© Fernanda Suarez

03 Sketch inspired by Nickelback's *Savin' Me*
© Fernanda Suarez



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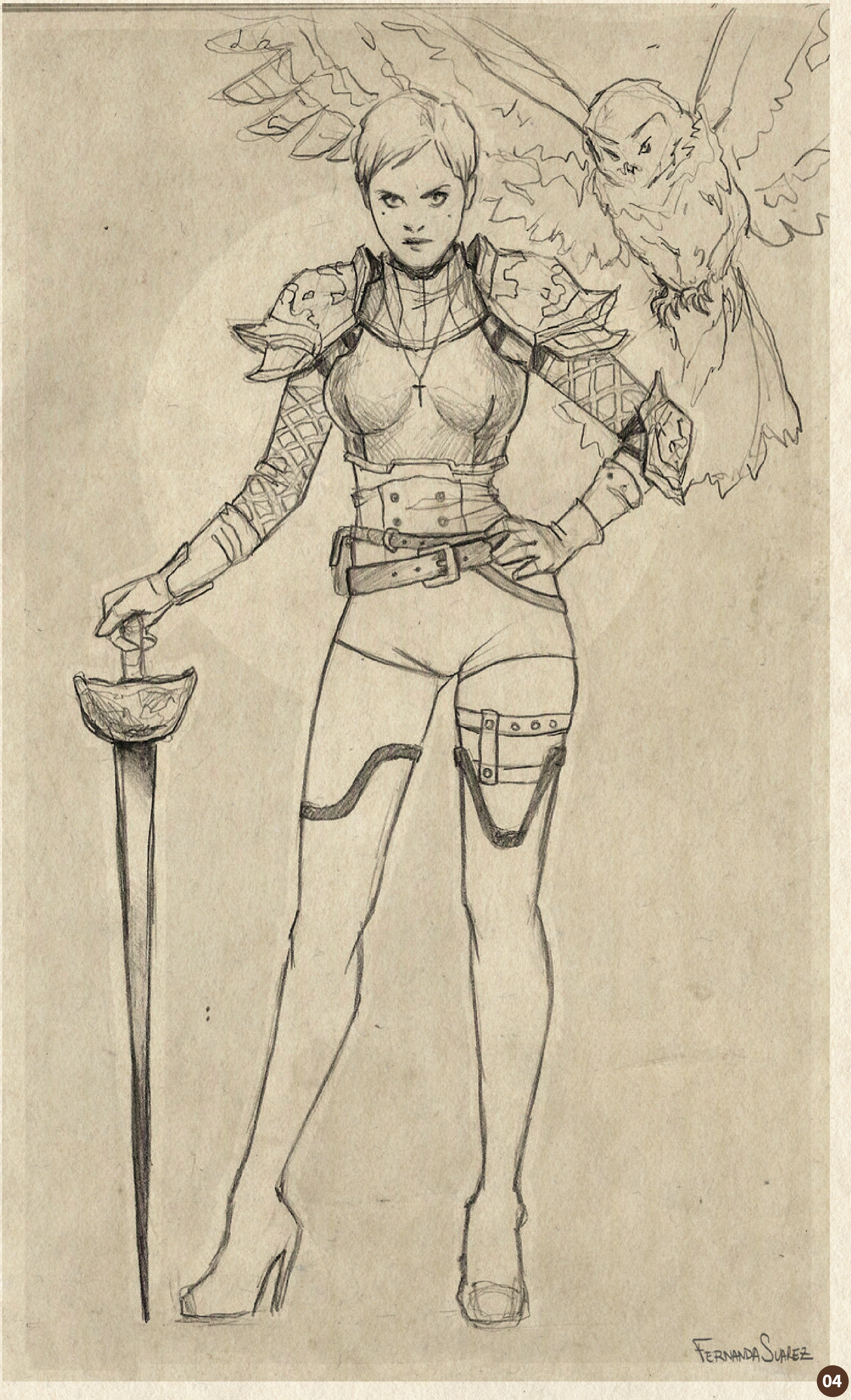
FERNANDA SUAREZ

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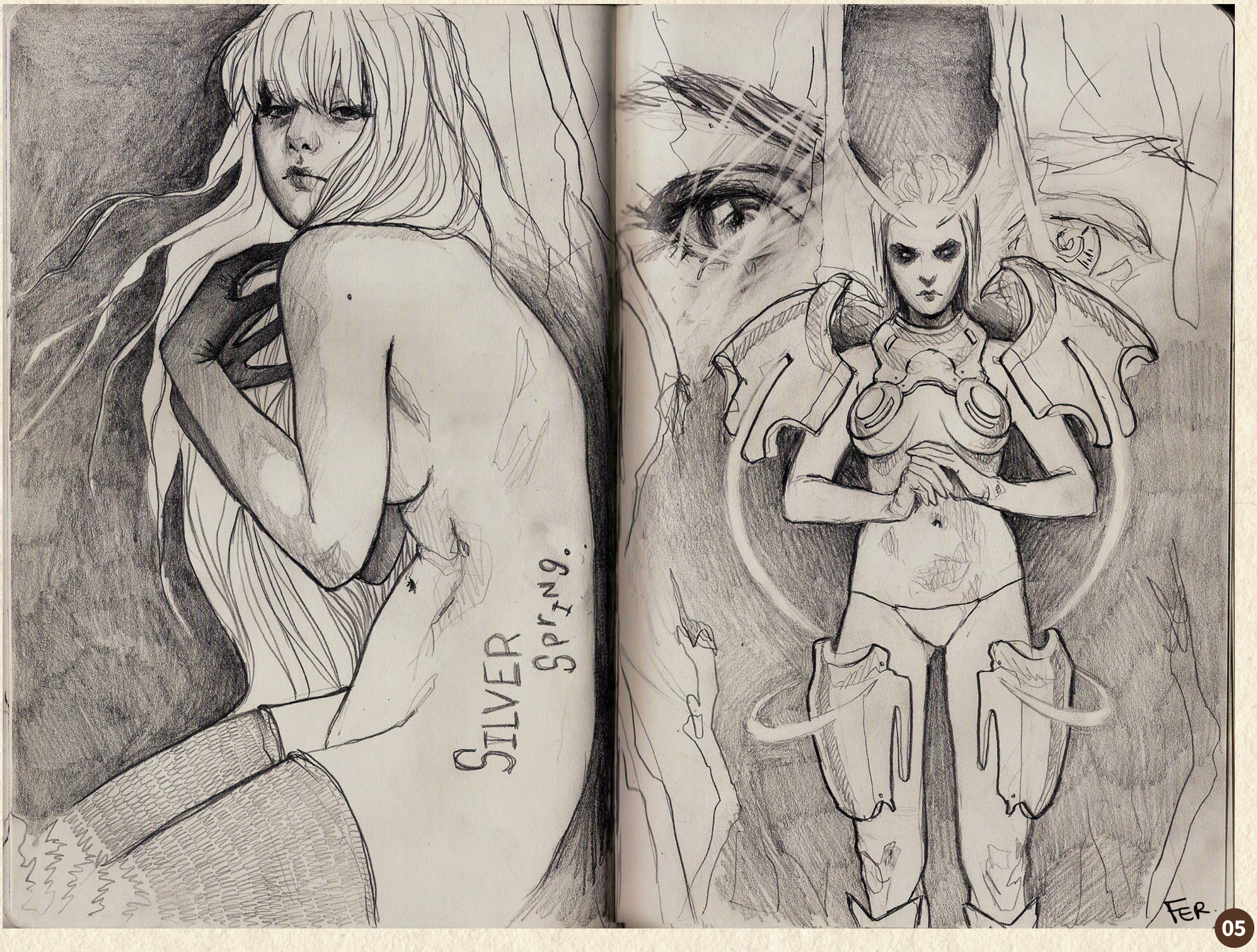

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PRO TIPS

Inspiration advice

Some people ask me how or from where they can get inspiration, and what I say to them is that inspiration should come from everywhere, from anything that surrounds you. You should go around with your eyes open to see and catch anything that could work as inspiration for you – you should be like a sponge and absorb everything that is around you, that way you will have more tools in your mental library.

Also inspiration is something that will get to you as you work, you won't get it while doing nothing and just waiting for it. The best ideas come when you are working hard, so the more you keep using your brain, the more it will work for you.

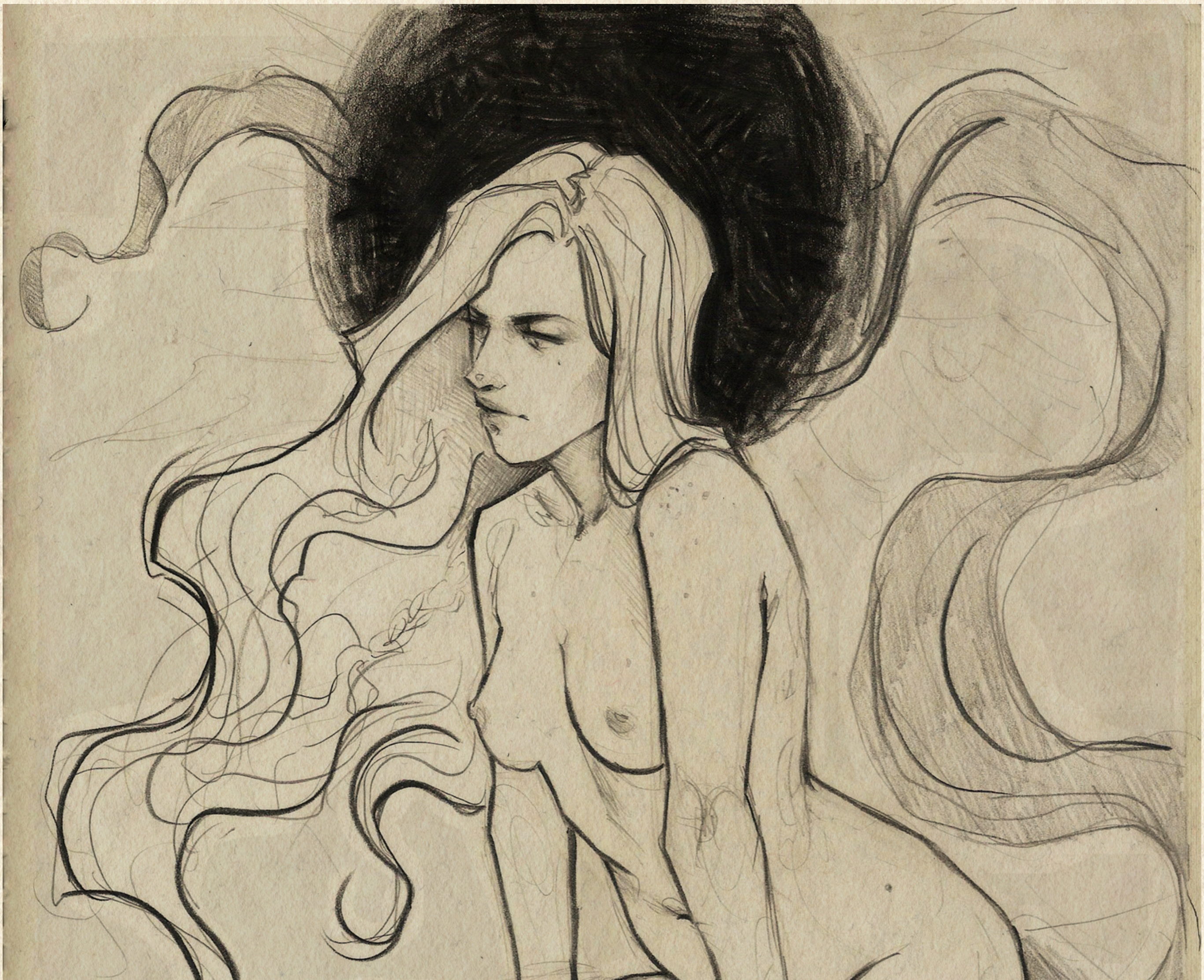
Building an image

When you are planning a painting, start with the general shape of it first. Try to make a sketch or thumbnail or whatever you prefer, that helps you define all the important things that need to be there, the basic structure of your idea. Once you get that and you see things that work, you can move ahead with details and the rest of the image.

If you see that something is not working in the first stage, it will be much harder to fix once you have moved on to a more advanced stage of development.

04 Character design, owl-inspired lady
© Fernanda Suarez

05 Just playing around with ideas
© Fernanda Suarez



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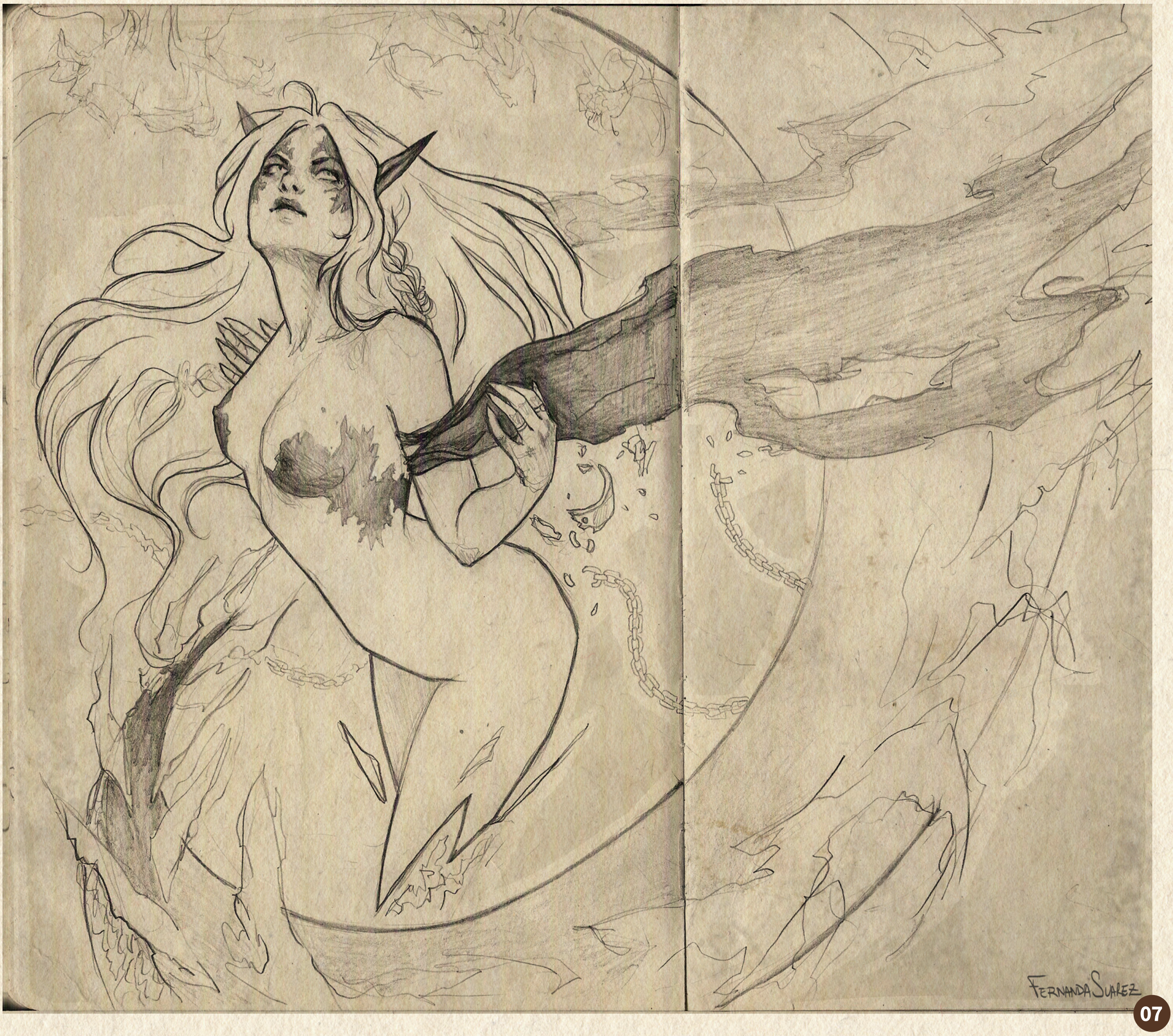

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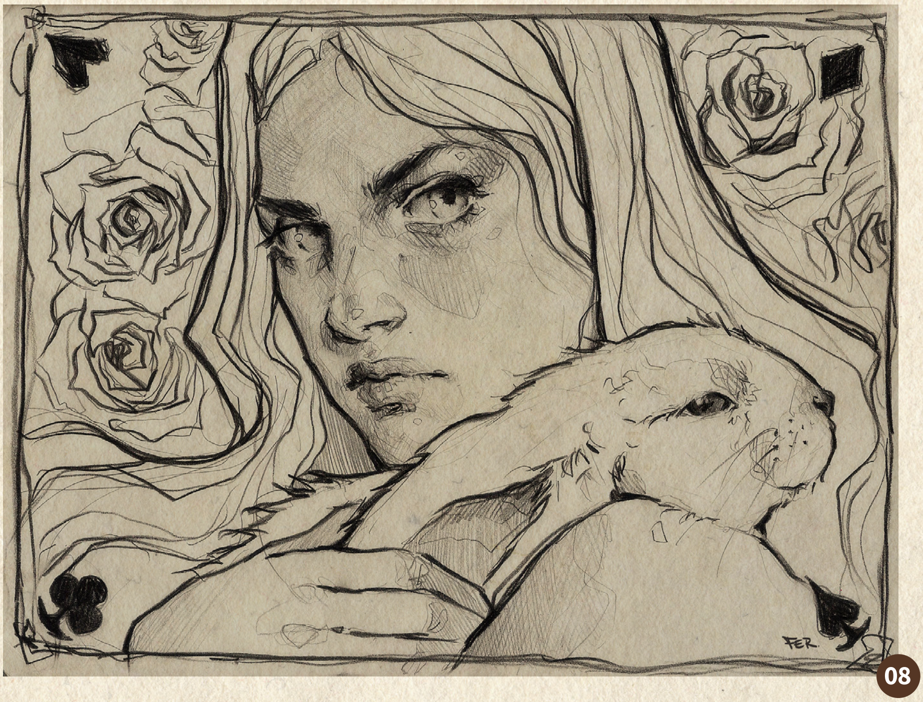
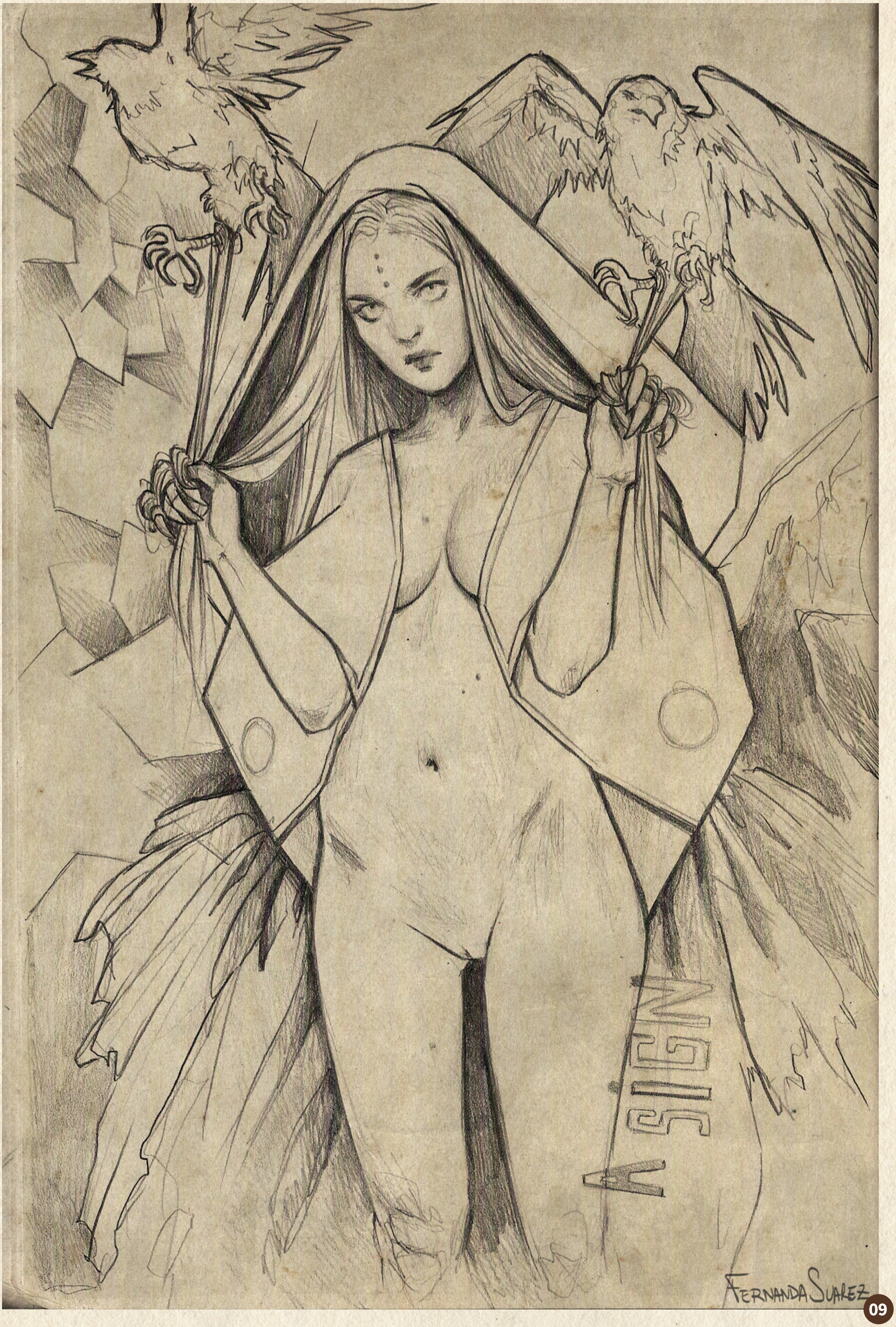


08

06 Sketch inspired by Iron & Wine's *Sunset Soon Forgotten*
© Fernanda Suarez

07 Sketch inspired by Niki & The Dove's *DJ Ease My Mind*
© Fernanda Suarez

08 Inspired by one of my favorite stories, *Alice in Wonderland*
© Fernanda Suarez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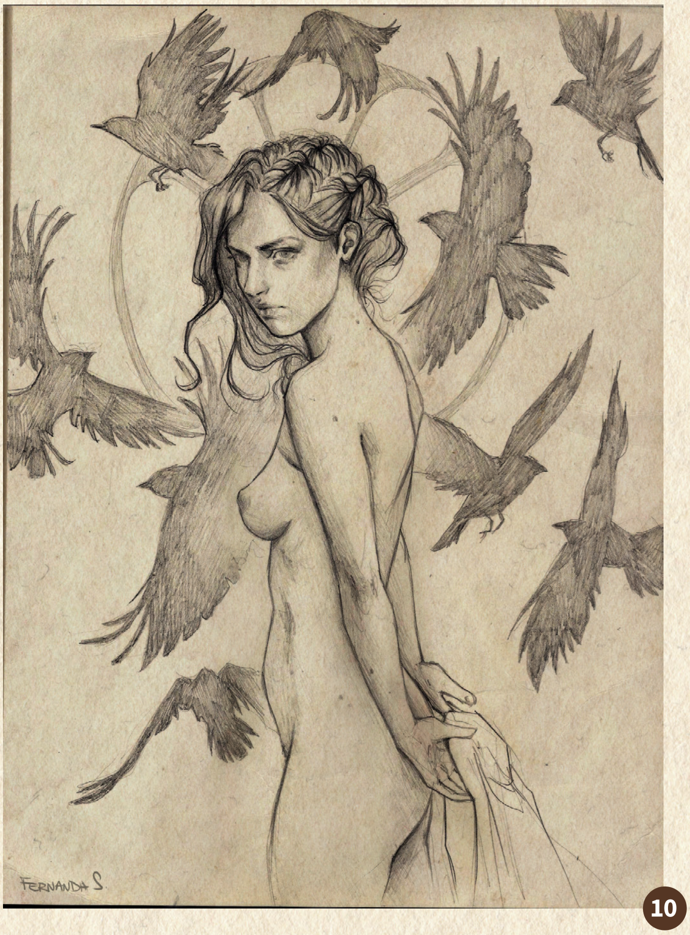

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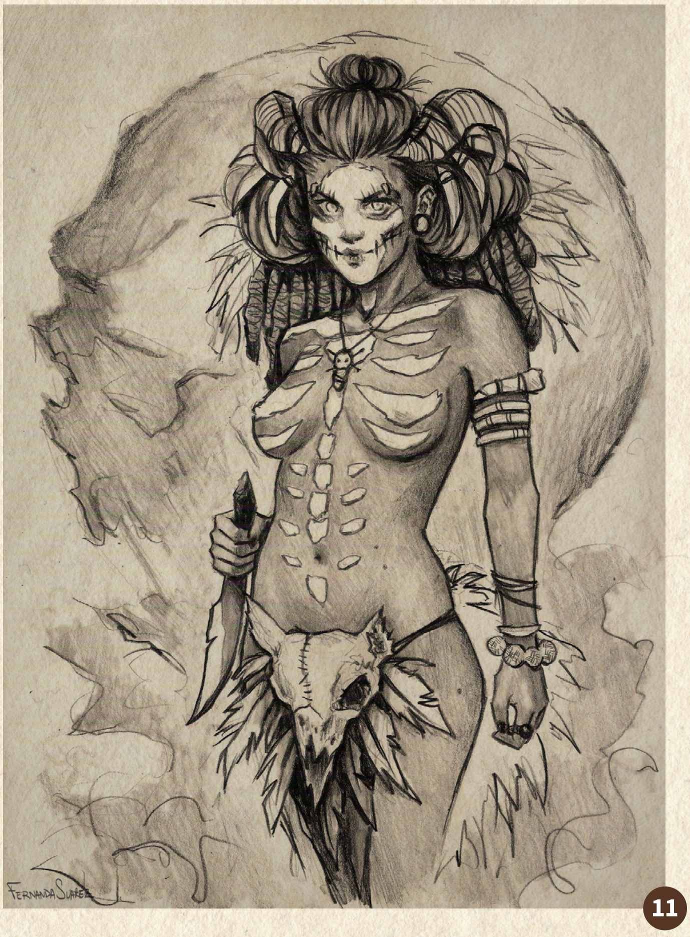

11

PRO TIPS

Don’t skip steps

Don’t try to find easy ways to get to a place or to fix something. You should take the time to learn and practice as needed, so that you learn everything that you need and you are not leaving any empty gaps. If you have gaps in your skills it will show in the final product, so take the time to learn.

I get people asking how to learn to draw for example, and there is only one answer: practice. The learning process is different for each person so don’t try to adopt someone else’s way of doing something – find your own methods. You can find this with practice and hard work; perseverance and hard work is the best advice in my opinion.

09 Sketch inspired by Bat For Lashes’ *Whats A Girl Have To Do*
© Fernanda Suarez

10 I love drawing and painting crows – I love their symbolism
© Fernanda Suarez

11 Voodoo queen, character design
© Fernanda Suarez

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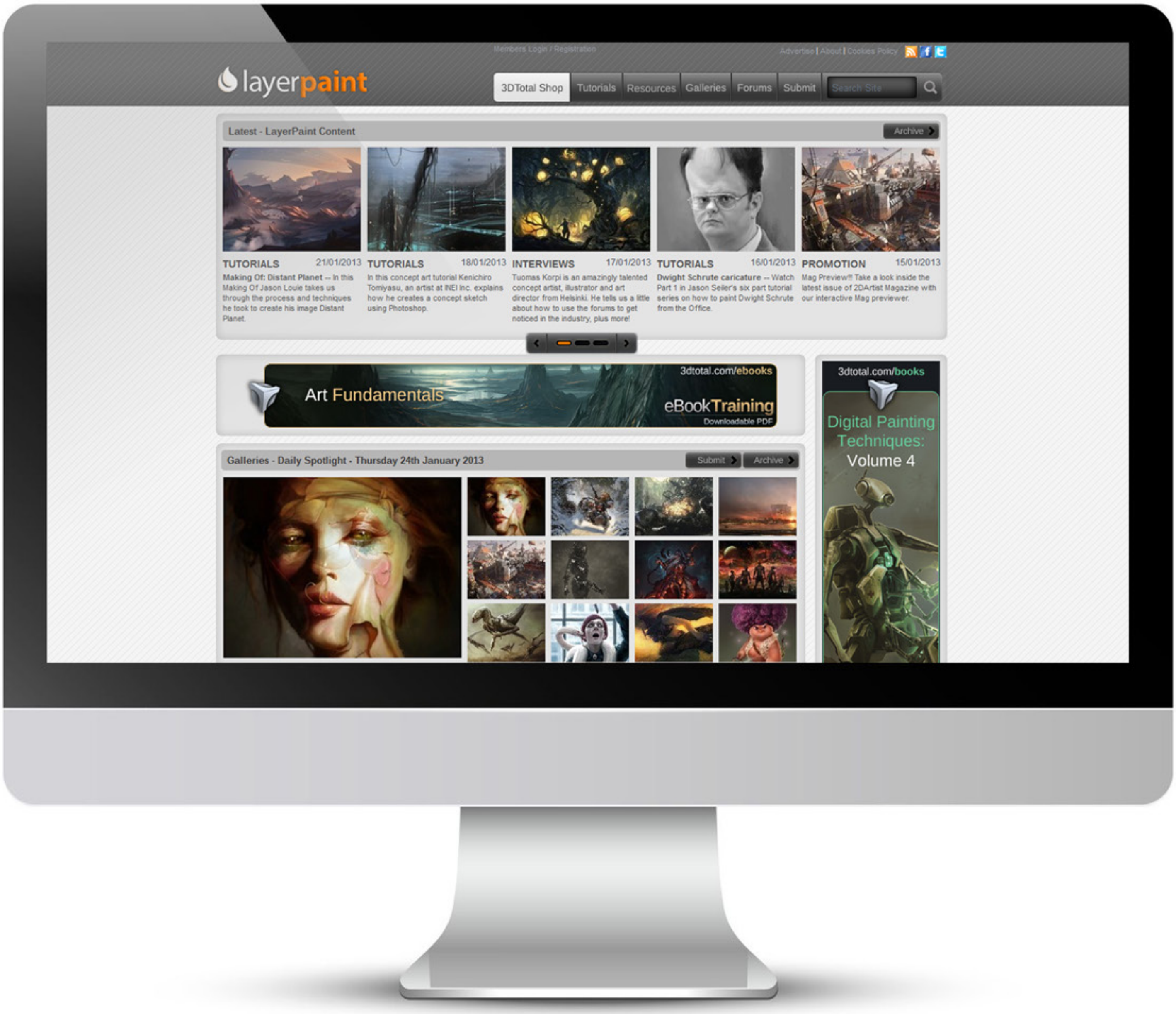

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Making Of: Distant Planet -- In this Making Of Jason Louie takes us through the process and techniques he took to create his image Distant Planet.

TUTORIALS 18/01/2013
In this concept art tutorial Kenichiro Tomiyasu, an artist at INEI Inc. explains how he creates a concept sketch using Photoshop.

INTERVIEWS 17/01/2013
Tuomas Korpi is an amazingly talented concept artist, illustrator and art director from Helsinki. He tells us a little about how to use the forums to get noticed in the industry, plus more!

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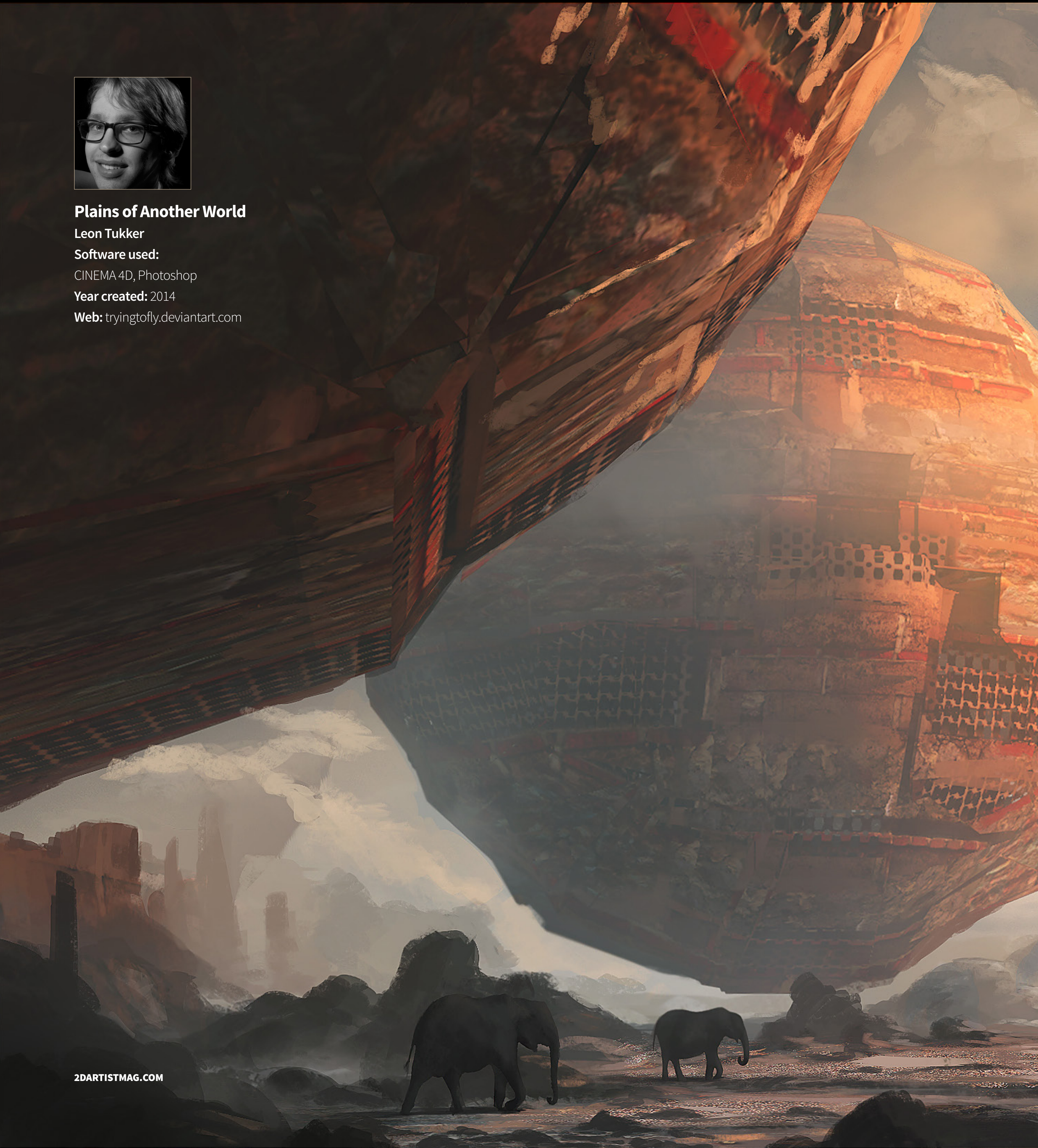
Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!



Plains of Another World

Leon Tukker

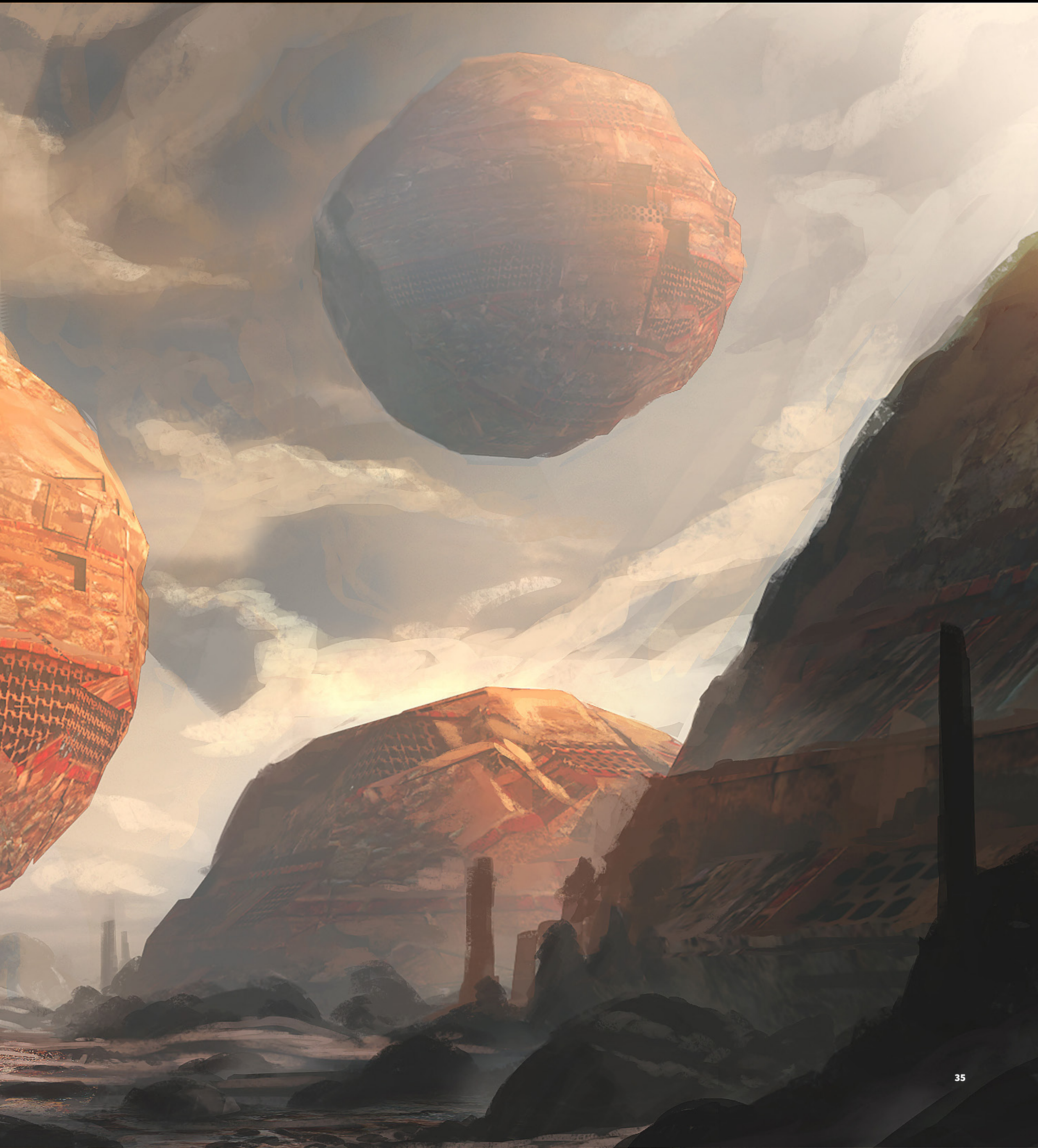
Software used:

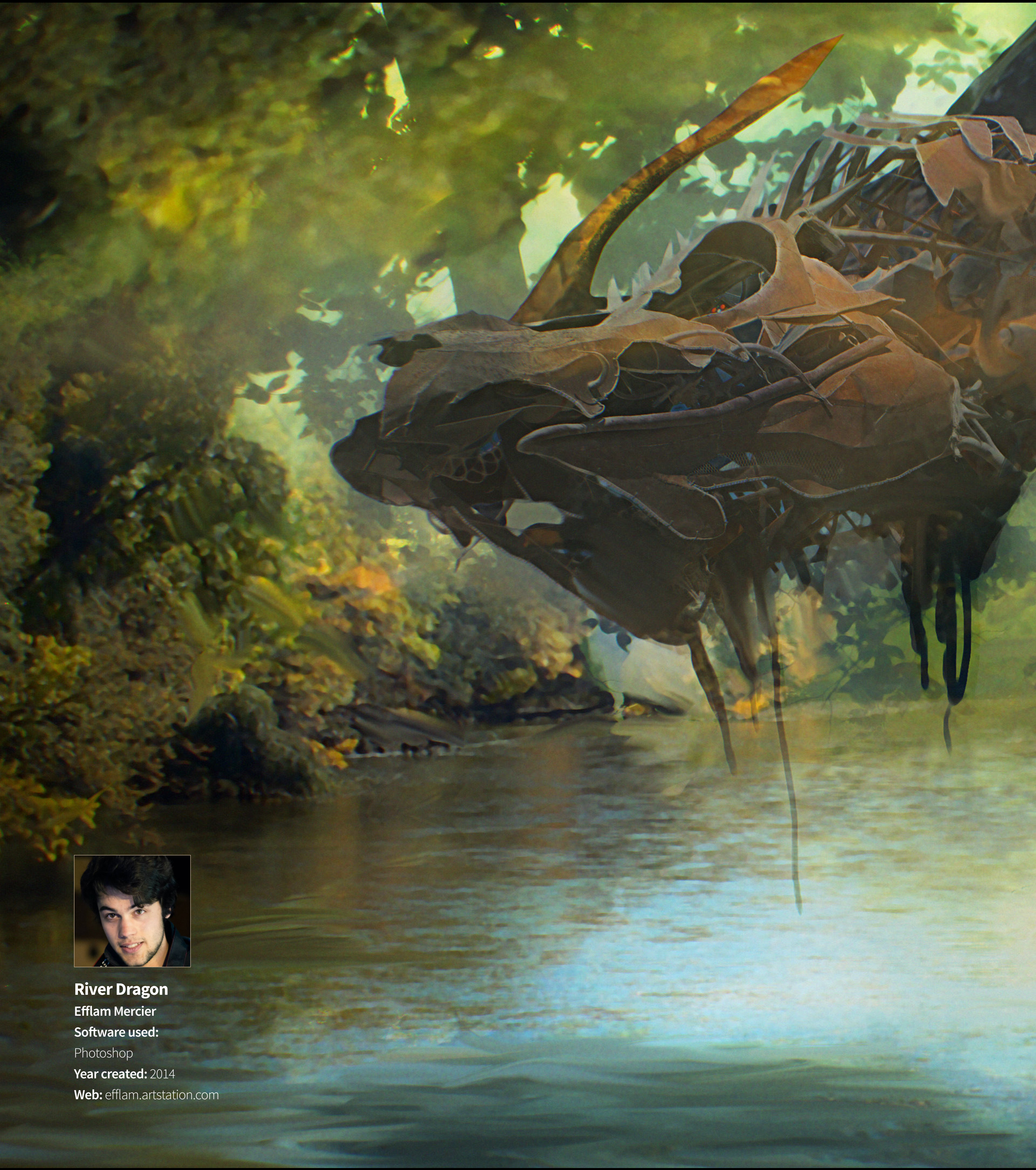
CINEMA 4D, Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: tryingtofly.deviantart.com

Submit your images! Simply email **jess@3dtotal.com**





River Dragon

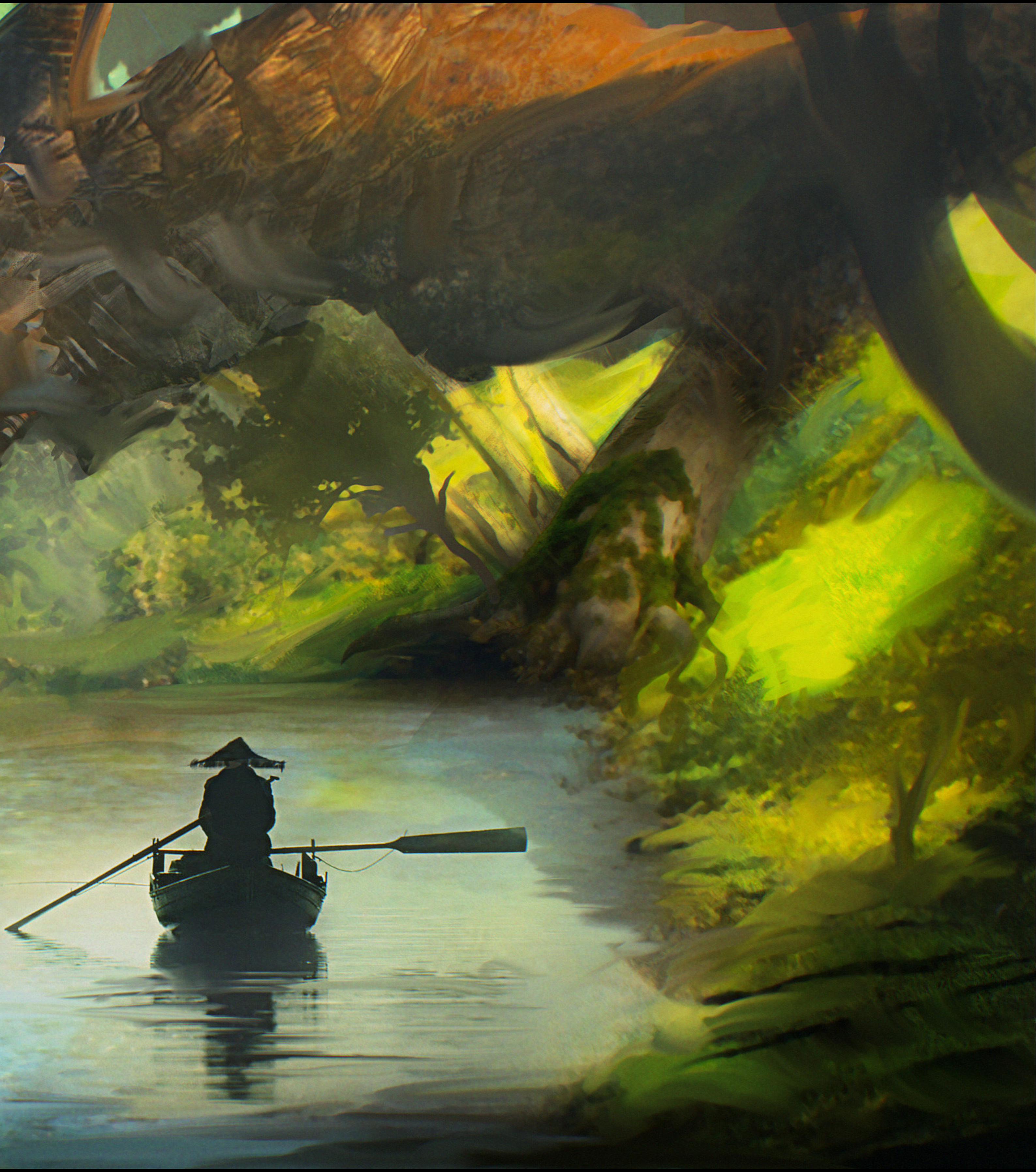
Efflam Mercier

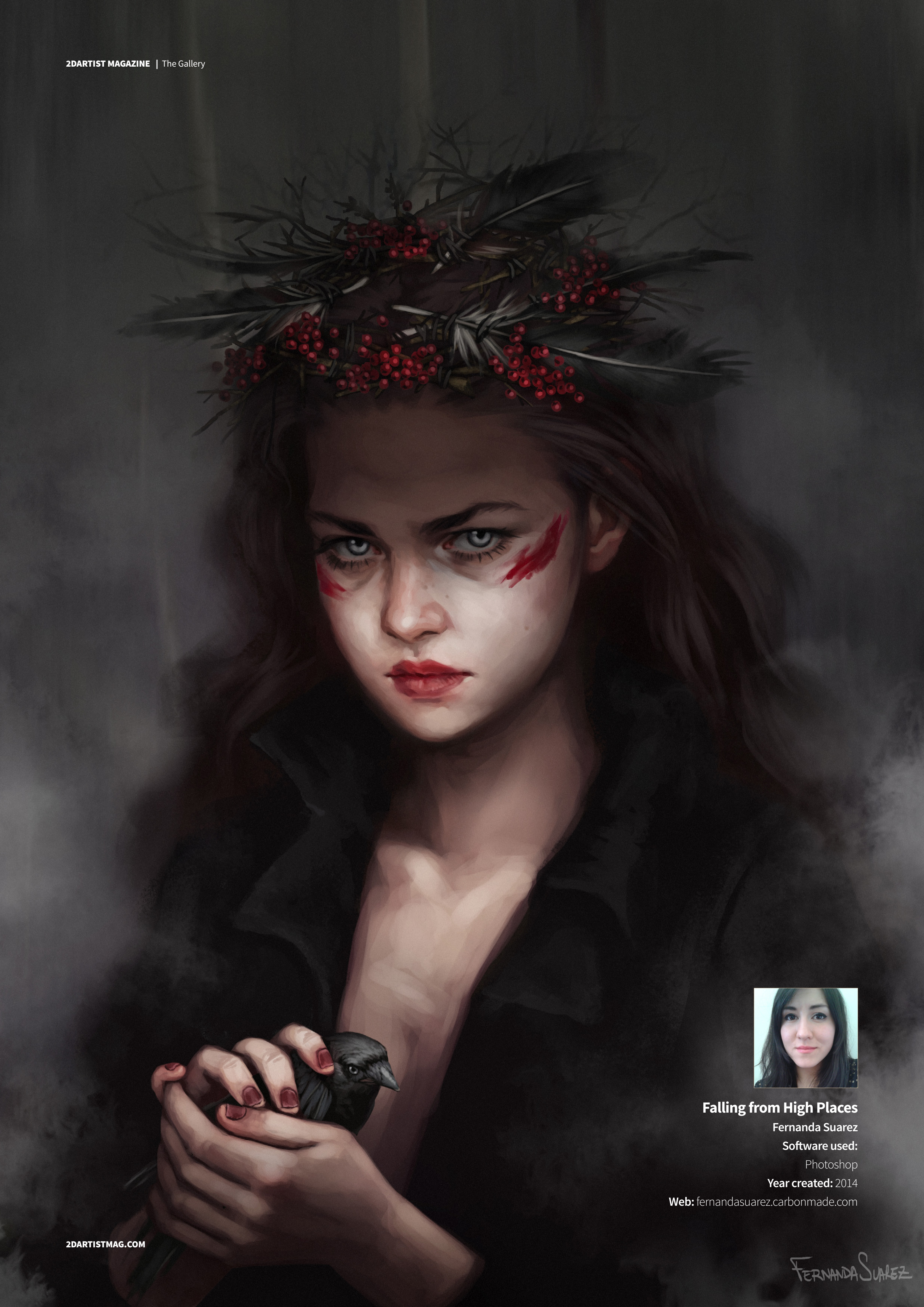
Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: efflam.artstation.com





Falling from High Places

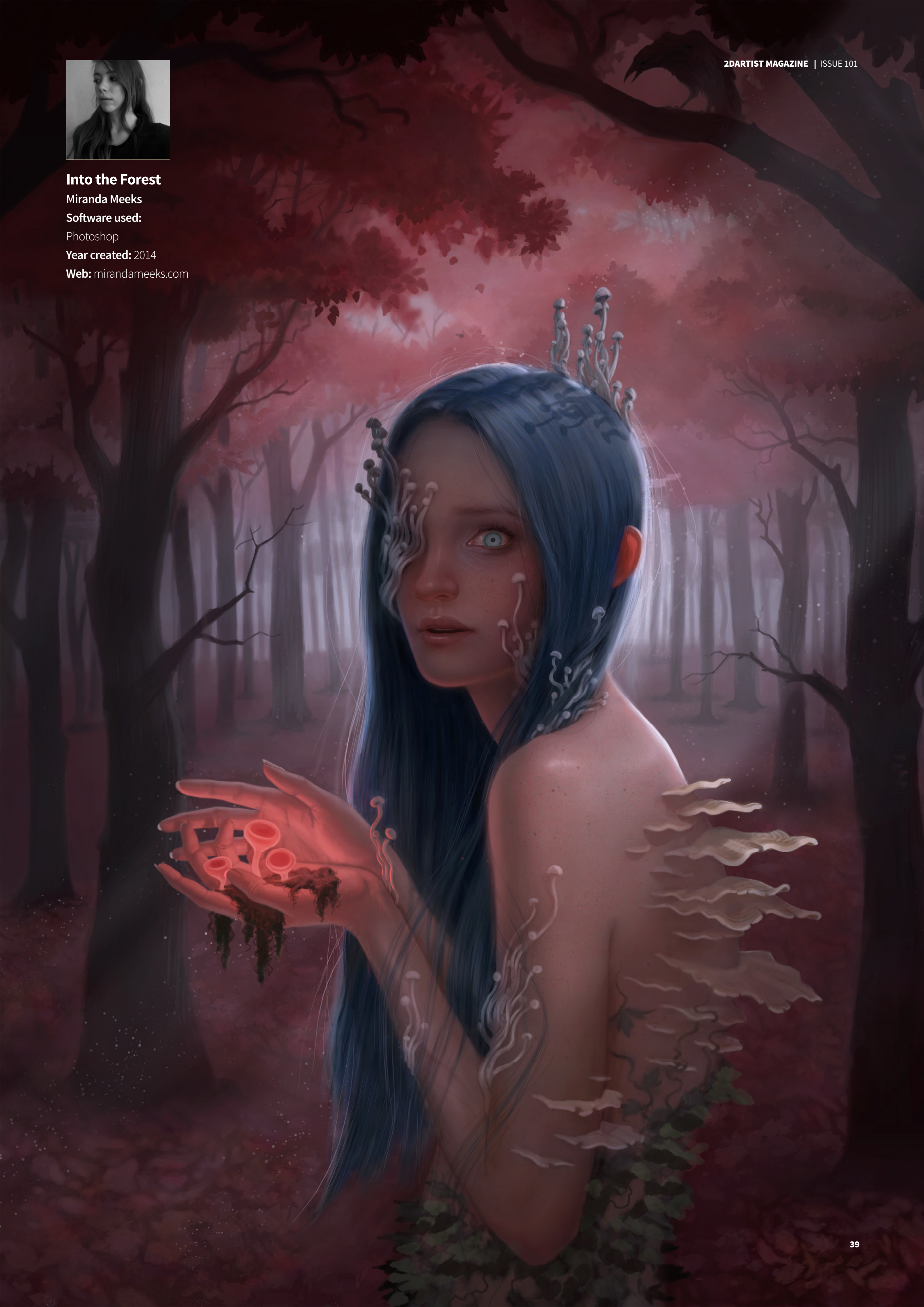
Fernanda Suarez

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: fernandasuarez.carbonmade.com



Into the Forest

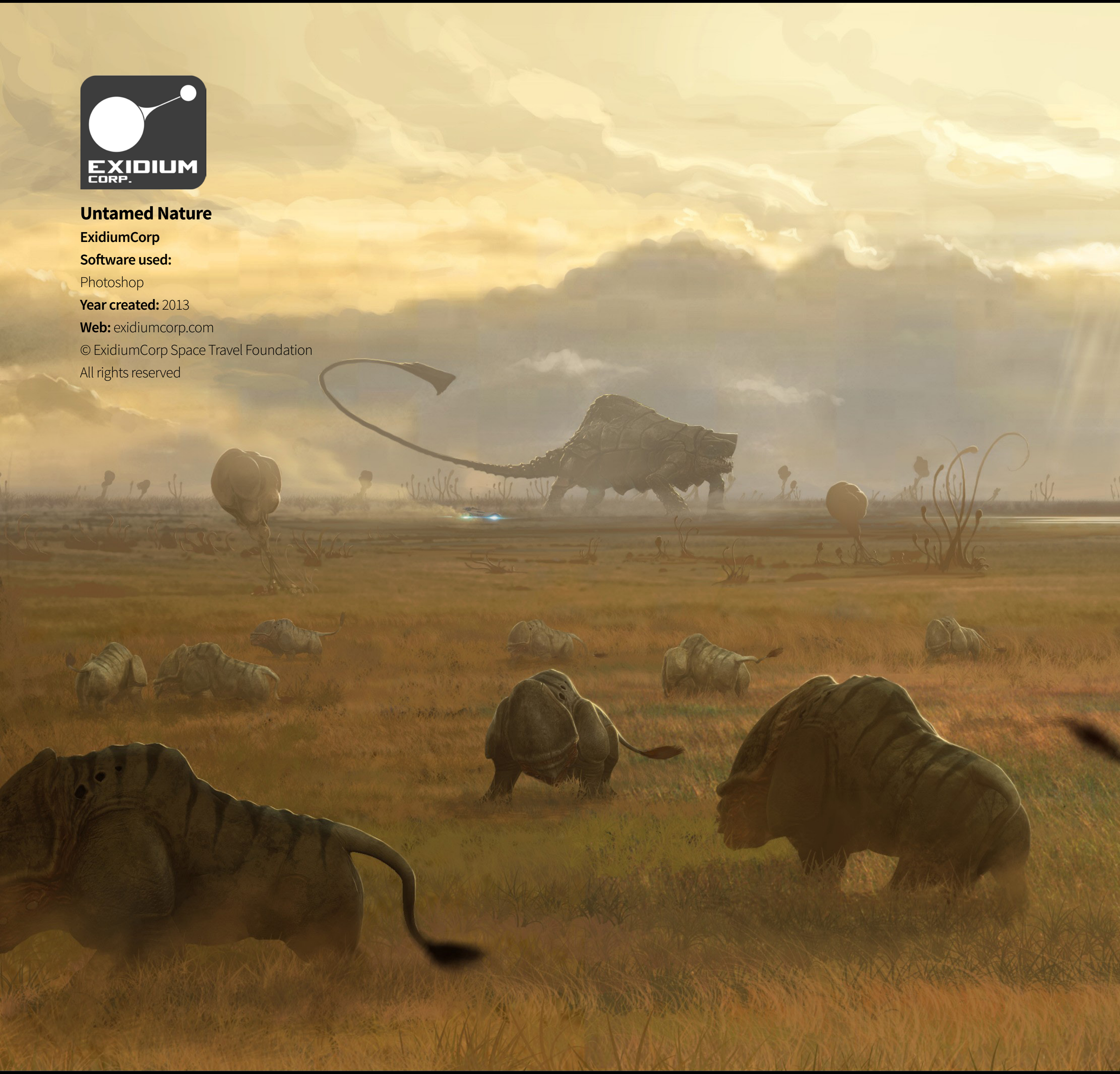
Miranda Meeks

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: mirandameeks.com



Untamed Nature

ExidiumCorp

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: exidiumcorp.com

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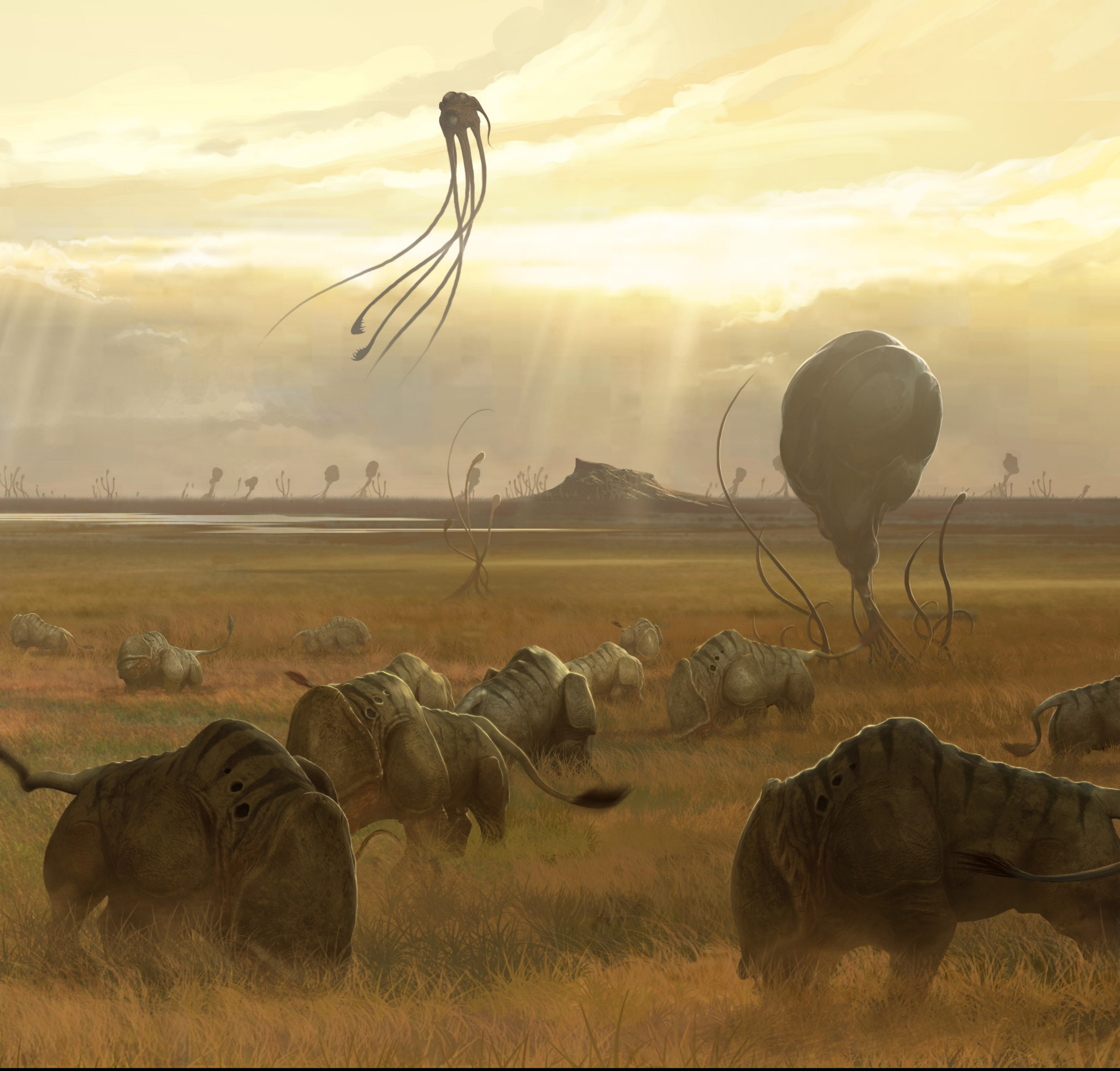
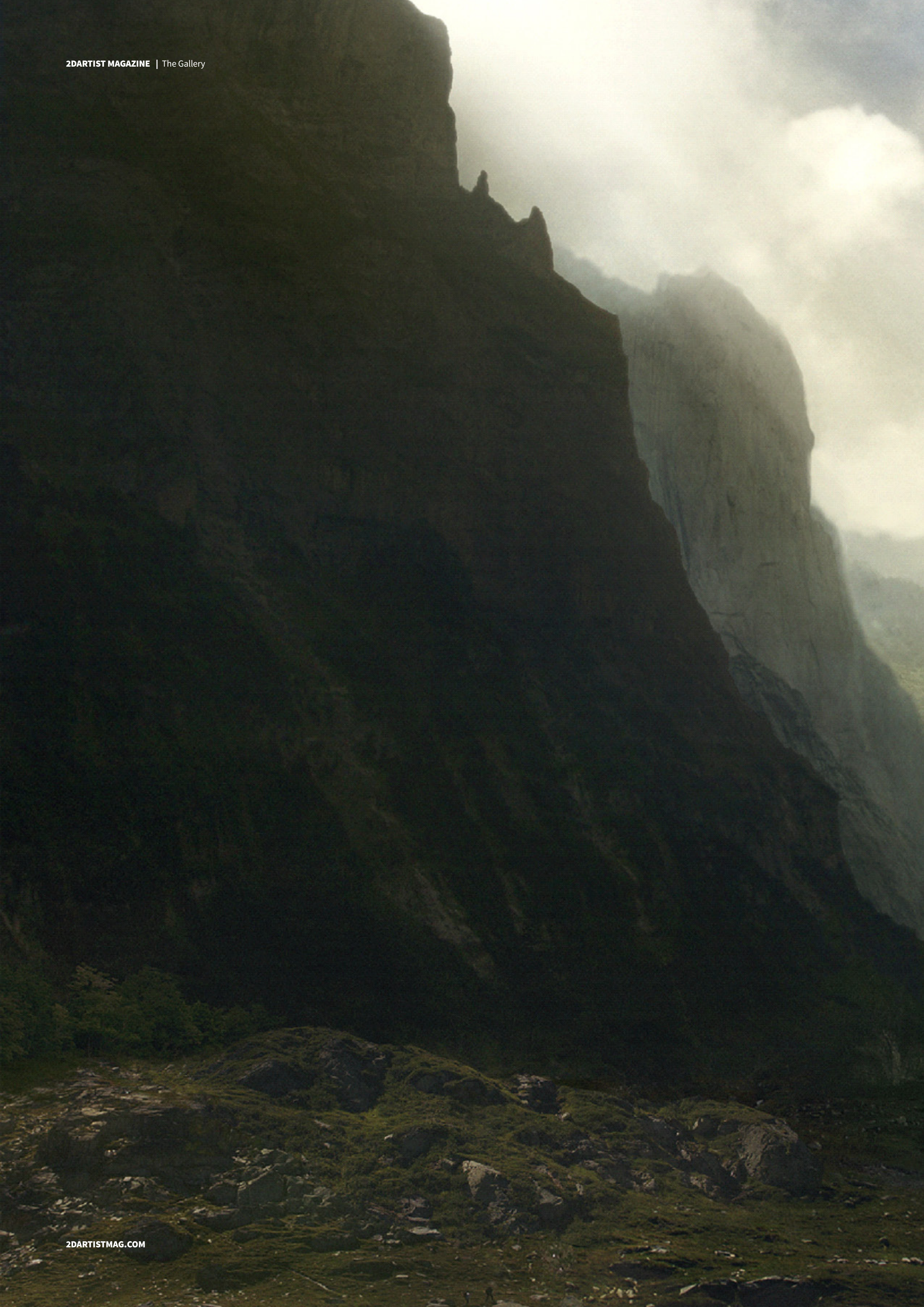
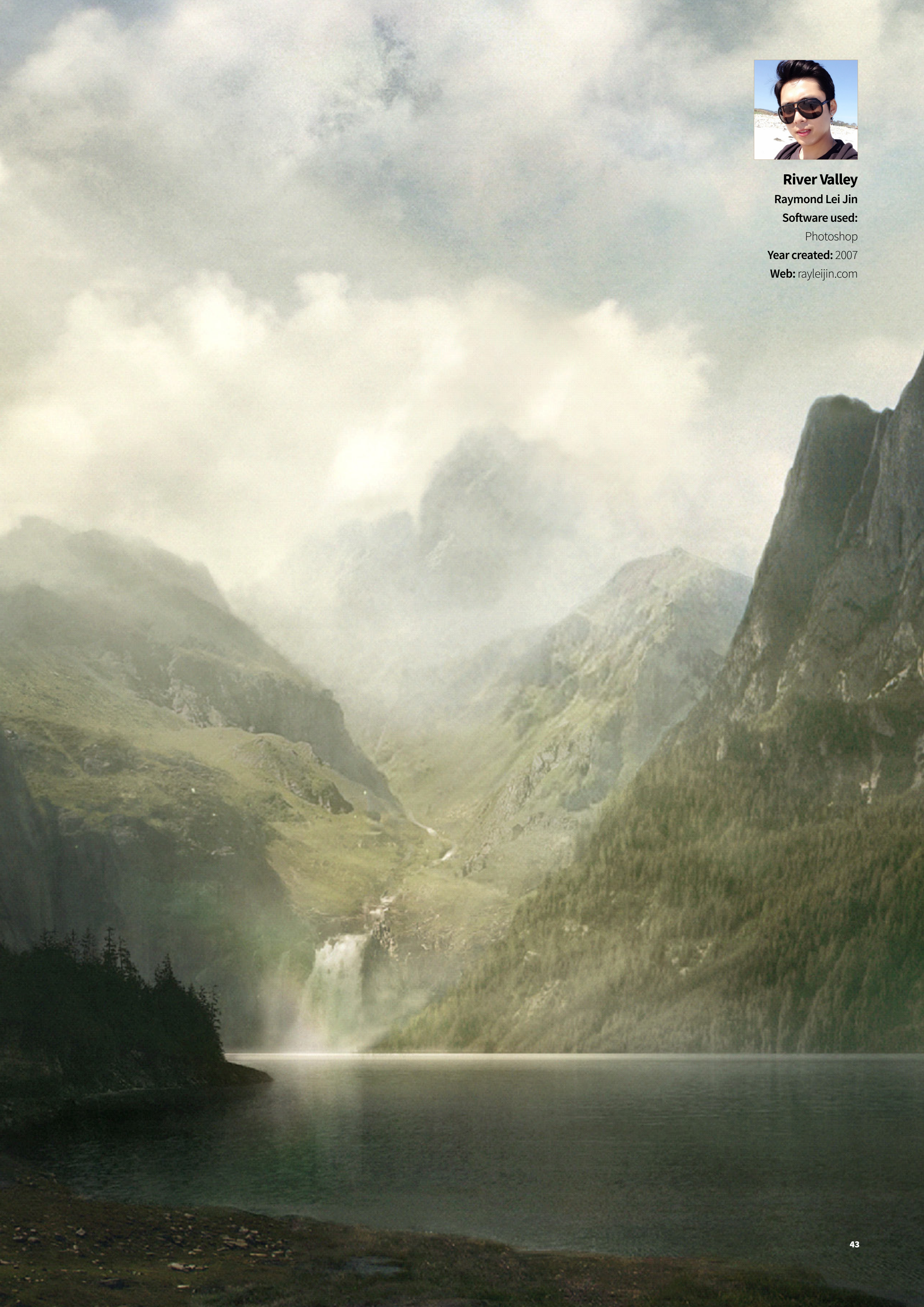






River Valley

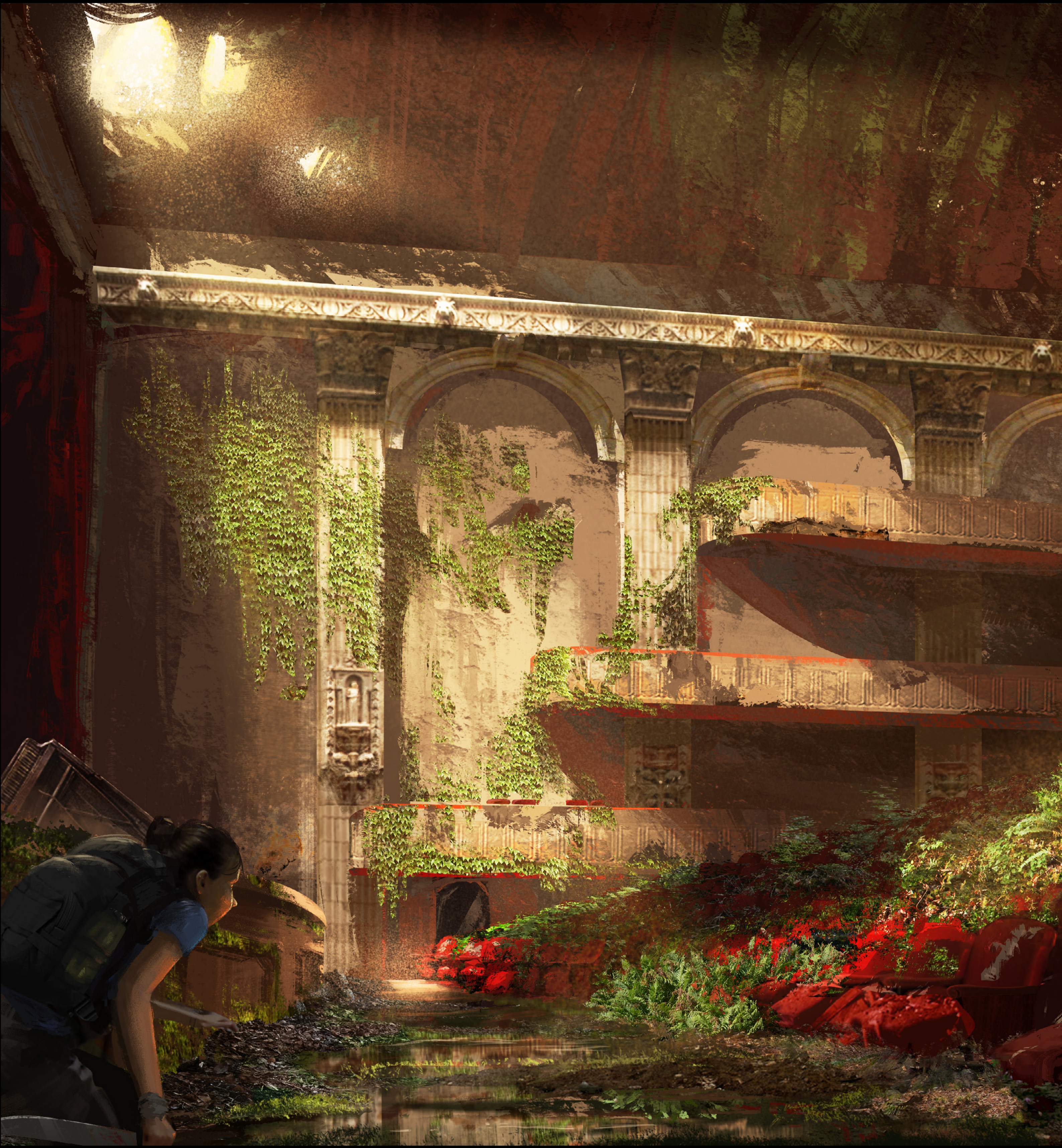
Raymond Lei Jin

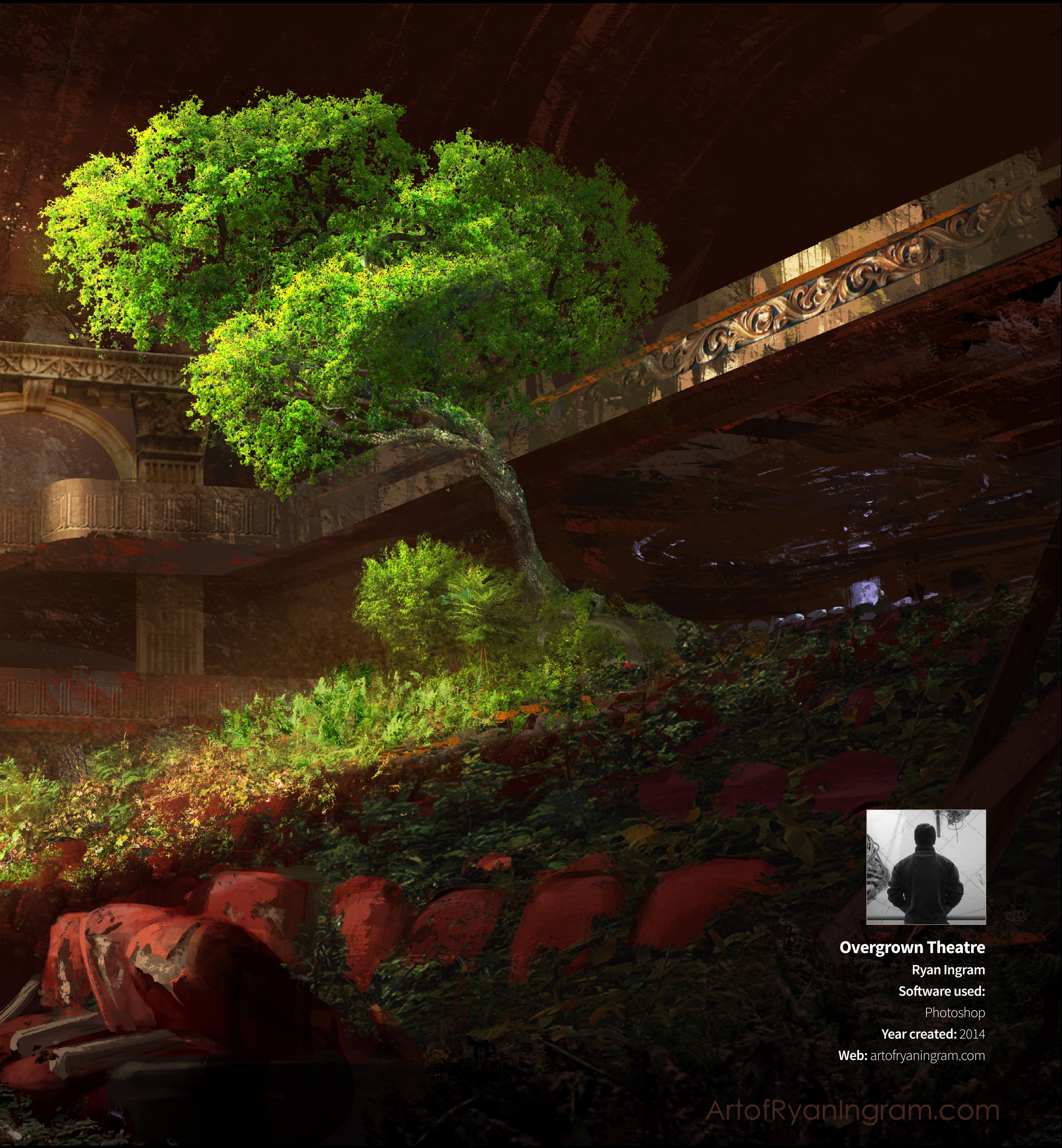
Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2007

Web: rayleijin.com




ArtofRyanIngram.com

Overgrown Theatre

Ryan Ingram

Software used:
Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: artofryaningram.com

Last Chance

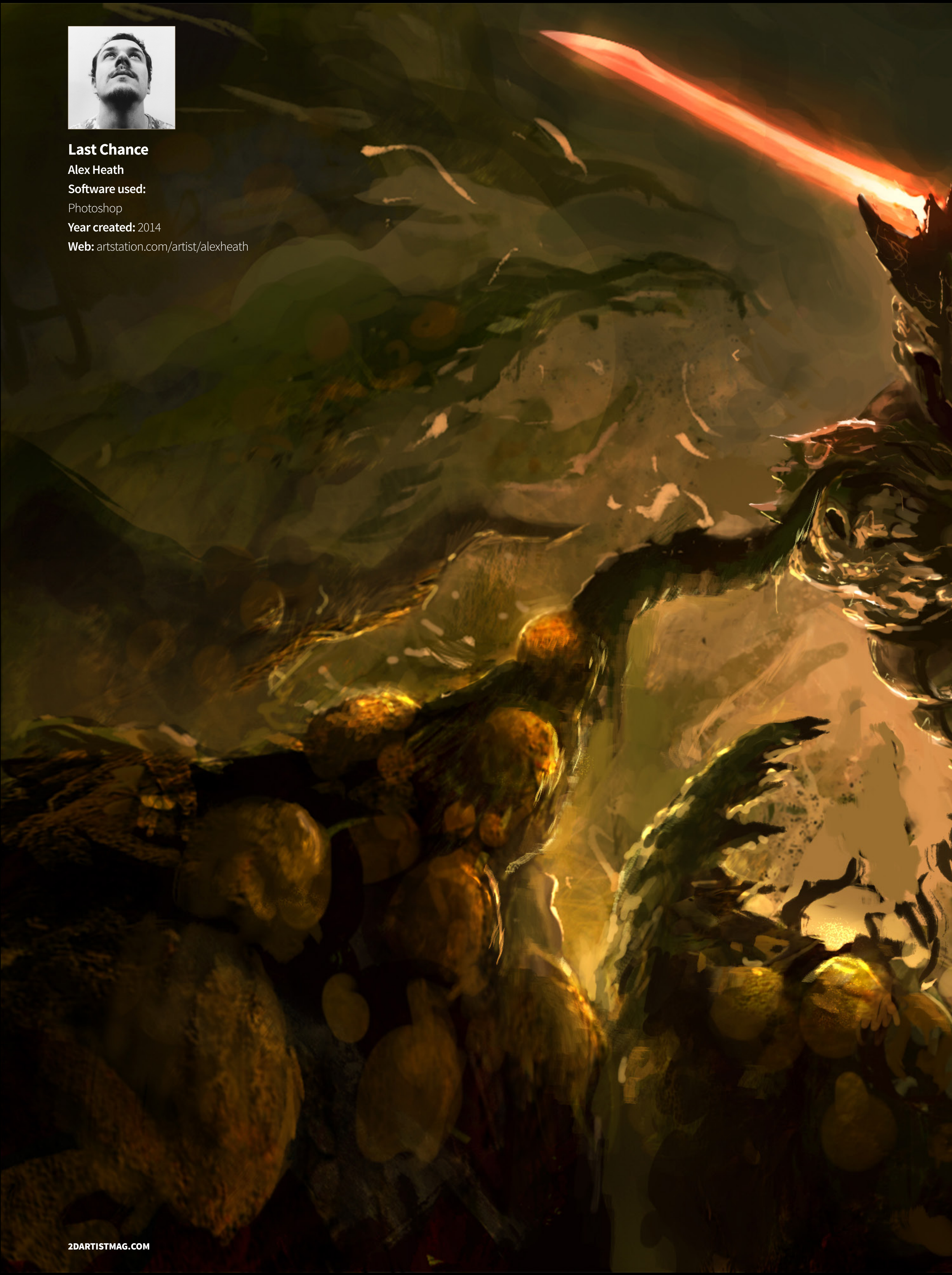
Alex Heath

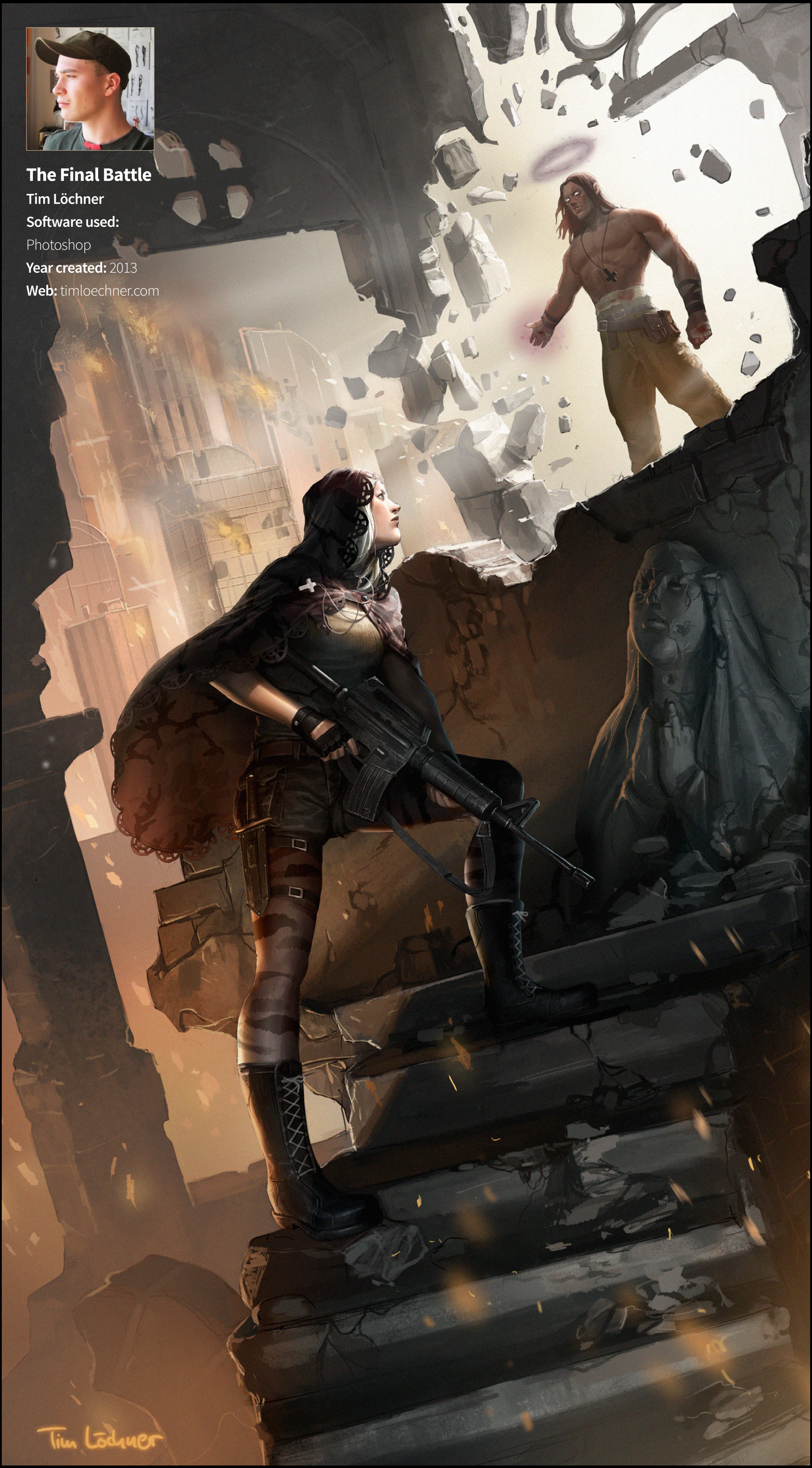
Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: artstation.com/artist/alexheath

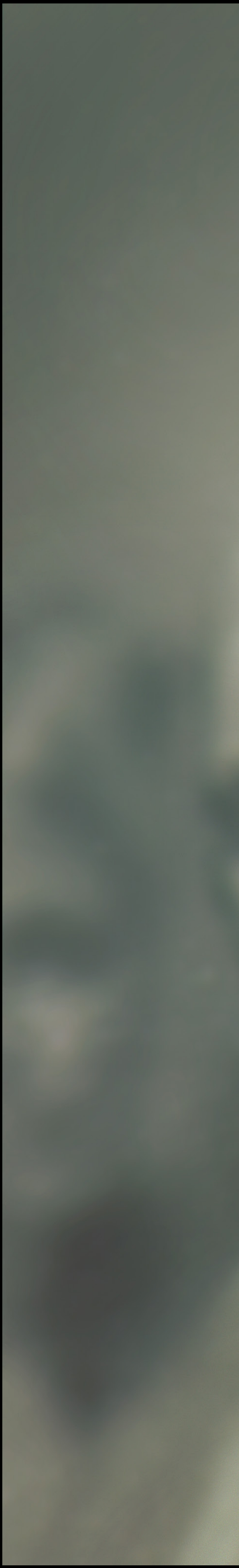


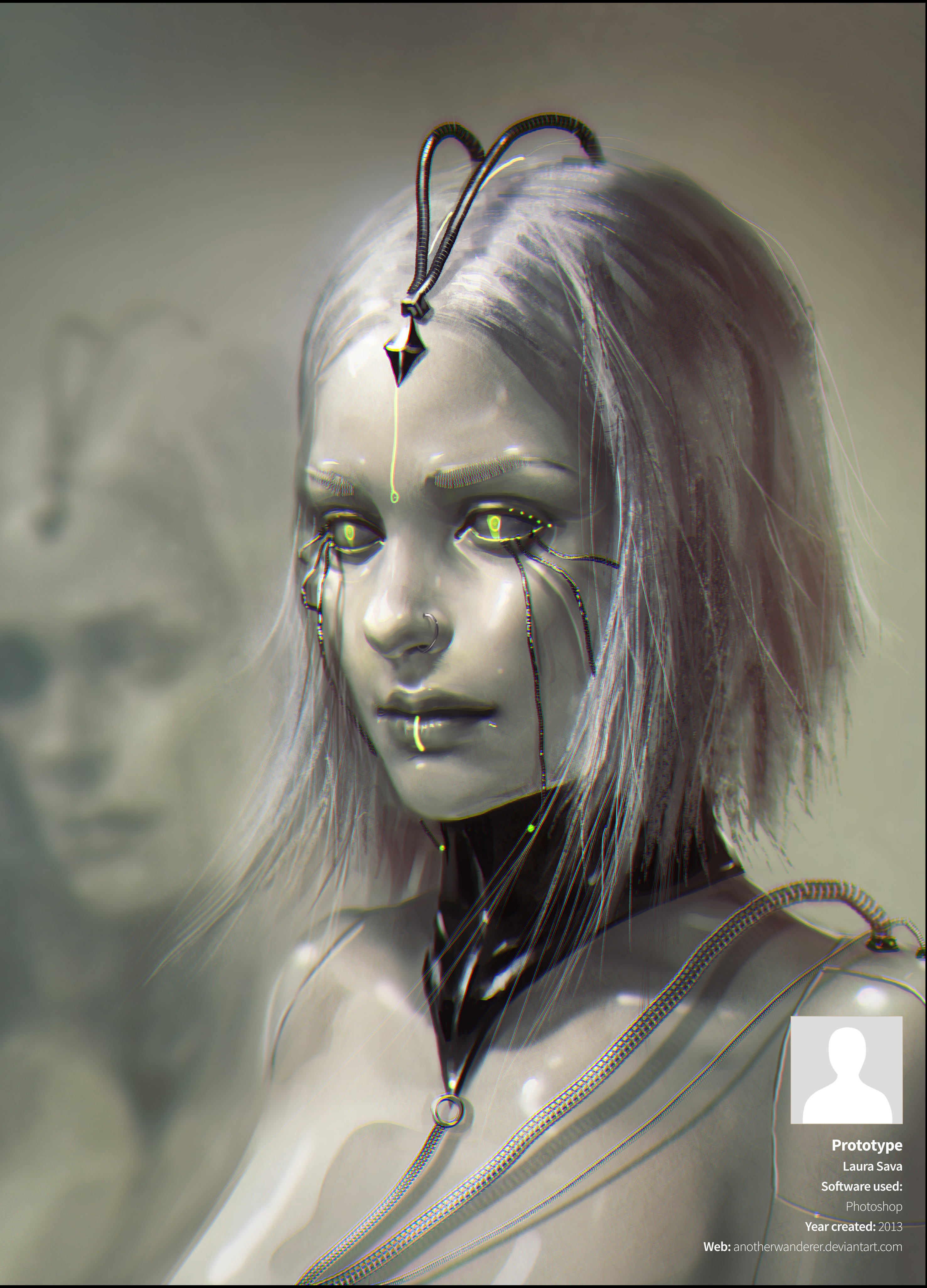

Tim Löchner

The Final Battle

Tim Löchner

Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: timloechner.com





Prototype
Laura Sava
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: anotherwanderer.deviantart.com

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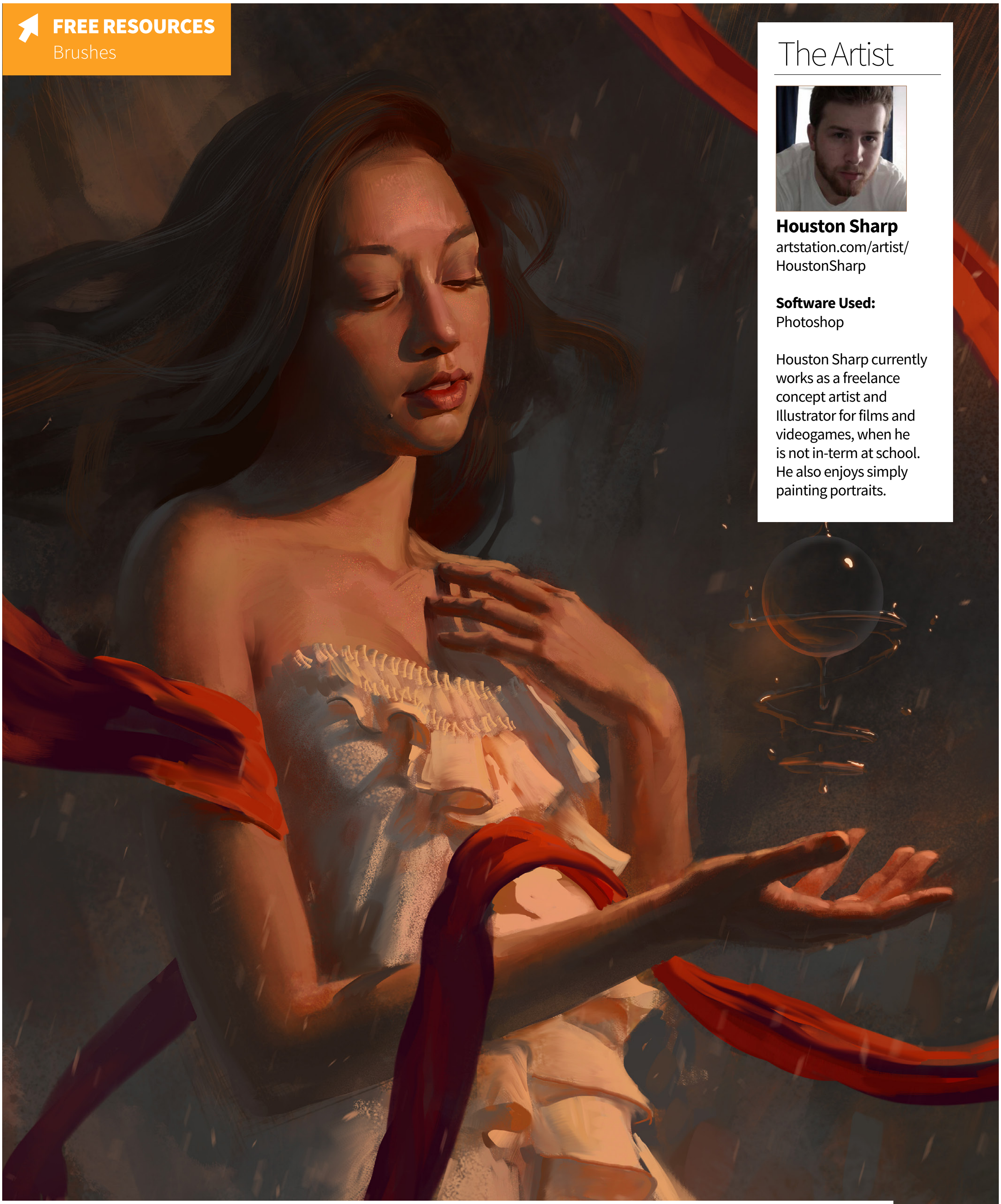


The Artist

Houston Sharp
artstation.com/artist/HoustonSharp

Software Used:
Photoshop

Houston Sharp currently works as a freelance concept artist and Illustrator for films and videogames, when he is not in-term at school. He also enjoys simply painting portraits.

Paint portraits with custom brushes

Using Photoshop, Houston Sharp gives an in-depth guide to creating useful custom brushes, which can be used for skin, hair and fabric to help speed up your portrait painting process! ▶

Speed up your portrait painting process with the use of custom brushes...

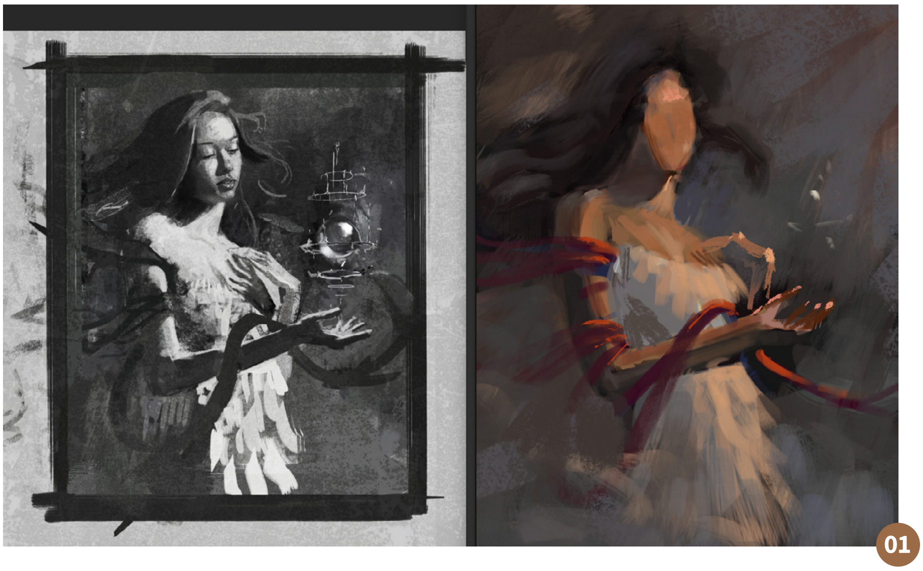
Custom brushes in Photoshop are powerful tools that can help you achieve certain effects, save time, or simply provide a new way to apply paint. This tutorial will cover how to create and utilize different types of custom brushes for different sets of tasks within a portrait painting. Along the way, I'll also touch upon general portrait painting and workflow tips, so you can get a feel for how I typically approach portraits, from the initial sketch all the way to the final brushstroke.

When I work digitally, I tend to approach the painting as if I am doing it in oils, at least initially. When the time arises to create and use custom brushes, I will utilize them in a way that does not compromise the painterly approach to the piece.

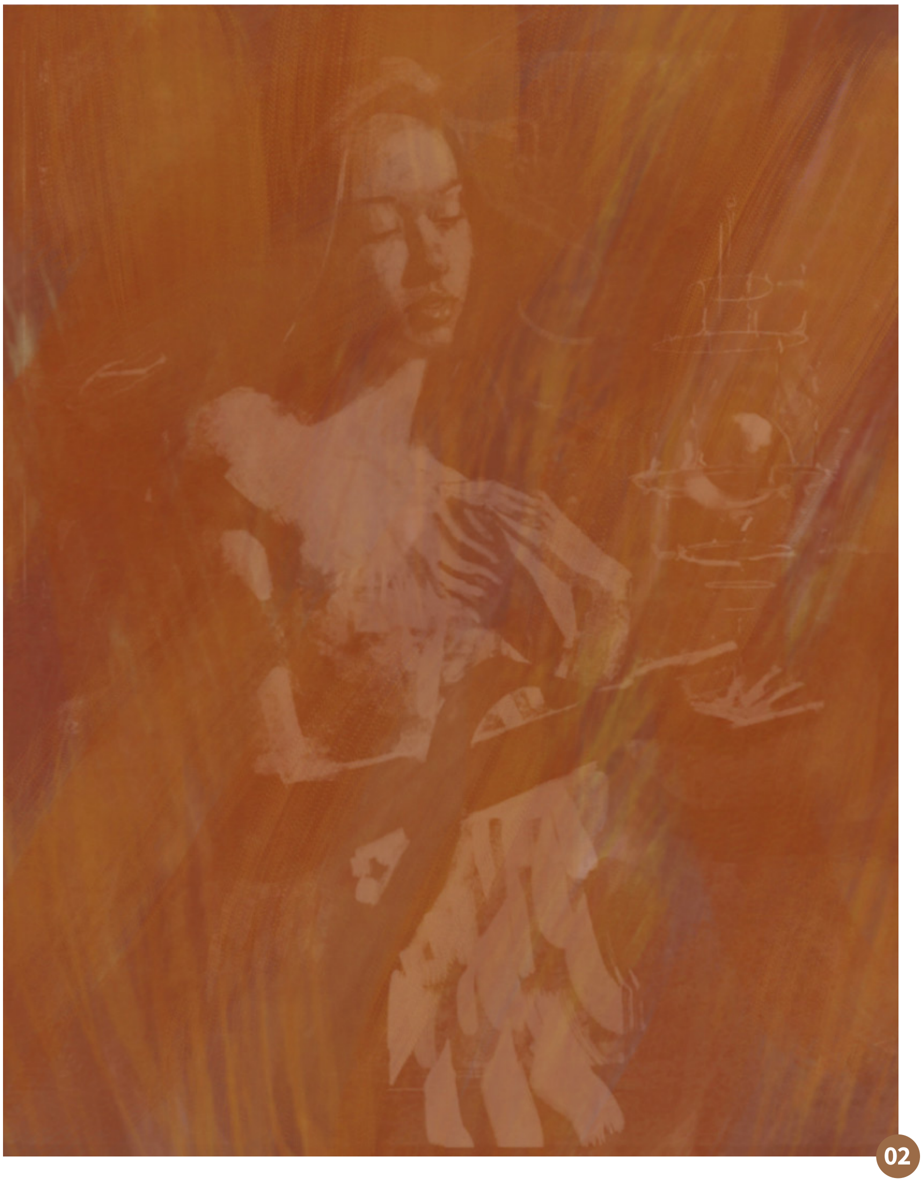
Aside from creating and using custom brushes, other topics covered include: thinking about composition; quickly setting up for a final painting; and how to effectively deal with complex forms. Hopefully you will learn something new about creating custom brushes from this tutorial. If you're already a pro with them, then I hope some aspects of my workflow inspire you to try new approaches to your work!

01 **Building a sustainable framework:** If an architect wants a house to both look great and not collapse, it's important that he sets up a good foundation and framework to build upon. This is also the case with us illustrators. I try to plan my paintings almost completely (with a little bit of room for 'happy accidents') before I even begin.

In this case, I explore compositions by sketching in only big black and white shapes, instead of doing line drawings. This not only establishes what type of subject I want to paint, it lets me see the value grouping of the composition as well. I also do many separate color sketches to settle upon a color scheme.

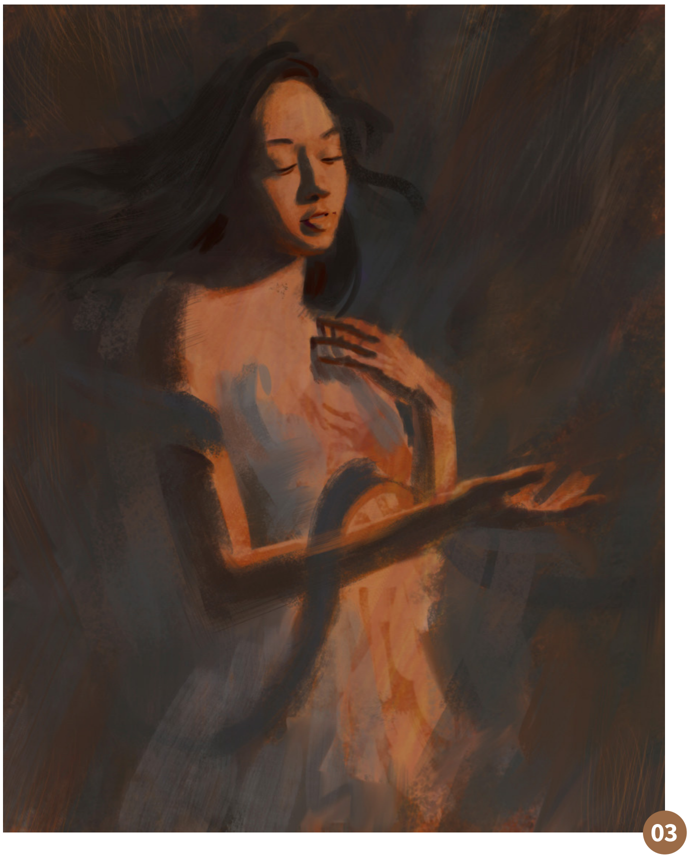


01 The values and colors are all planned, so you don't have to worry about them later



02 Creating a vibrant underpainting to paint on top of

02 **Creating a mess:** Now that all of the major decisions have been made about what to paint, it's time to start. I begin my paintings with a warm, vibrant mess of color. The purpose of this is to give a surface that isn't white to judge my values against while painting. The colors also show through the brushstrokes I put on top of it, which creates a richness in the colors that can be seen when the painting is complete. ▶



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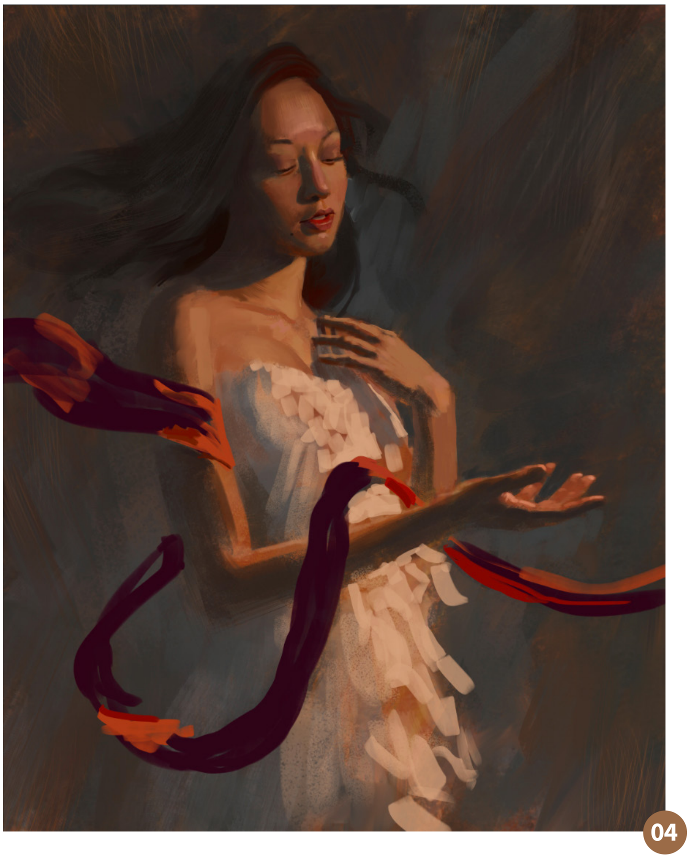


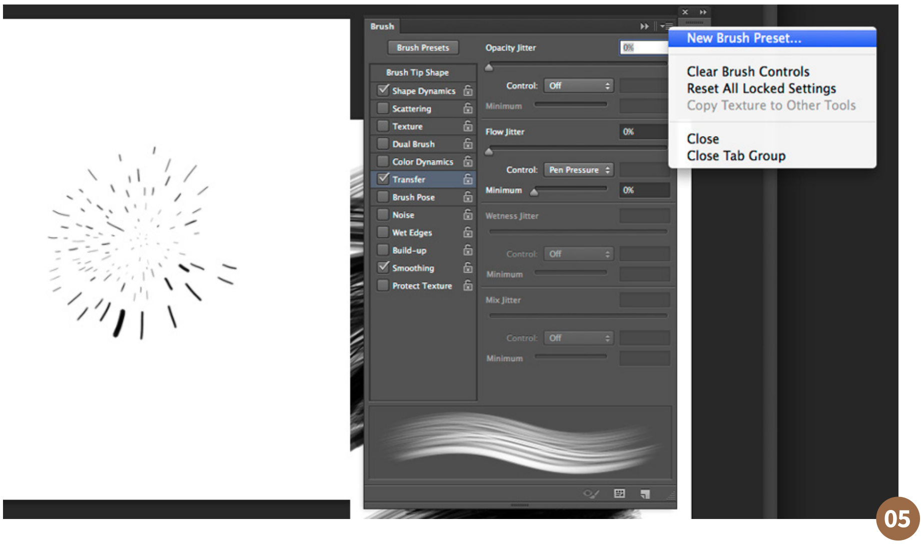
04

Instead of drawing the idea I came up with in my sketch onto the new canvas, I can simply drag the value sketch onto this warm layer and set it to Screen mode – an instant value-grouped under-painting! There was another reason for not doing a line drawing in step one!

03 **Sticking to the shadows:** Starting with the shadows and working your way towards the light is not easy when inventing your own colors and values, but it is rewarding. While painting the shadows, I try not to let myself get too uptight. It's important to remain loose and fluid at this stage; let your brushstrokes be messy, and let some of that orange mess below seep through the cracks.

It's also important to consider the color and direction of your light source, as it will affect the color of the shadows. As a general tip for inventing your own color, contrast warm light sources with cool shadows. Also, be sure to maintain your overall value shapes.

04 **Let there be light:** After spending a decent amount of time establishing the shadows and dark areas, I do the same with the light. I really slow down at this stage and pay attention to the relationships between the colors I'm putting down. For instance, is this part of her cheek slightly more orange than that part? Is this part slightly less saturated than that part? Cooler or warmer? Faces don't consist of one skin color, so it is important to show these varying hues, temperatures and values in relationship to each other in order to create a convincing portrait. Once again, consider the color and direction of the light source.



05

Opacity Jitter 0%
Control: Off
Flow Jitter 0%
Control: Pen Pressure
Minimum 0%

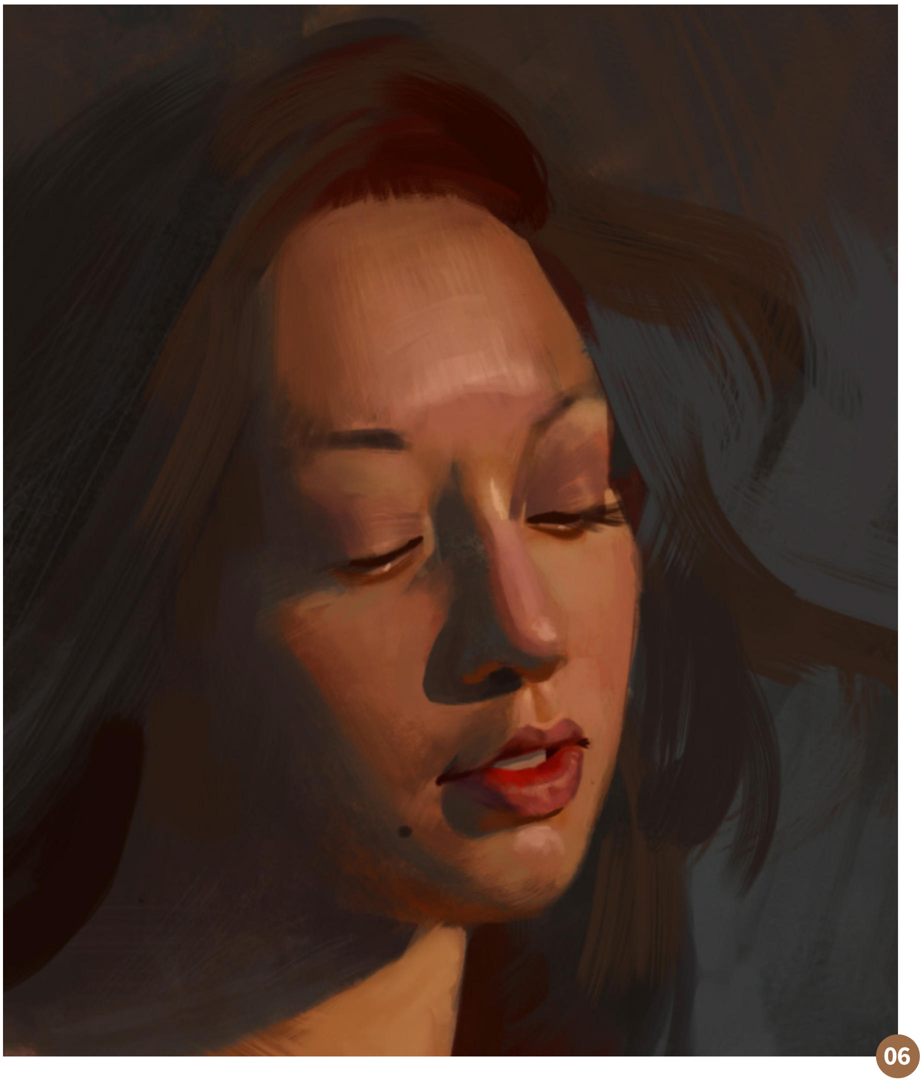
☑ Shape Dynamics
☐ Scattering
☐ Texture
☐ Dual Brush
☐ Color Dynamics
☑ Transfer
☐ Brush Pose
☐ Noise
☐ Wet Edges
☐ Build-up
☑ Smoothing
☐ Protect Texture

05 **Custom brushes:** Here is where I will put energy into creating and using a special custom brush. I want a silkier brush to slap on my paint for the hair.

To do this, open a small new document (my default for making brushes is 500 x 500 pixels at 150 dpi) and paint what you imagine the tip of one of these brushes might look like if you were staring straight down the tip of an actual brush. Then, go to Edit > Define Brush Preset, and save it. Lower the spacing in the Brush window, set the flow to pen pressure, and it's good to go! Don't forget to save its current settings by clicking New Brush Preset.

06 **So smooth…** Don't think of using this custom brush as a magical brush that will make realistic-looking hair appear – we will get to that magical brush later. This silky brush was created simply so I can paint with a softer, flowing touch. Long, flowing hair is, after all, usually pretty smooth and soft.

That being said, don't be afraid to use this brush on other areas of the painting as well, just for the



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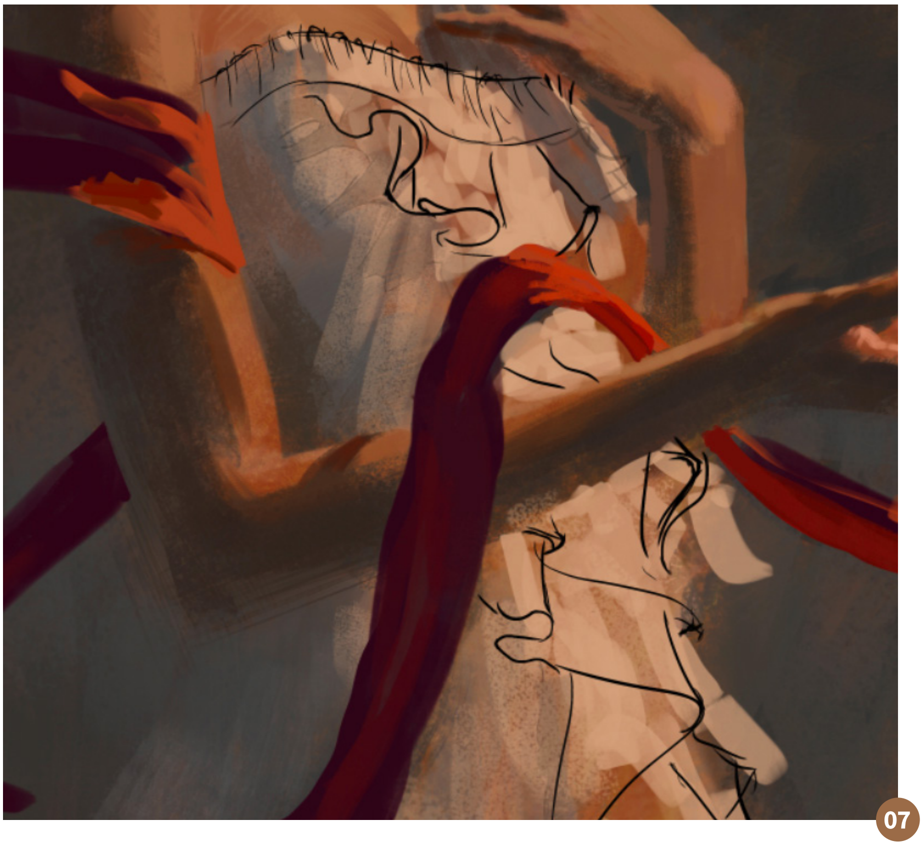


07

sake of brush variety. I use it on her forehead, for example. Also, it's fun to use the eraser with this preset to carve away at shapes with a softer feel. Actually, it's not a bad smudge brush either.

07 **Back to the framework:** It's time for me to tackle the ruffled fabric, but it's far too complex to just start slapping paint down and hope for the best. For these problem areas, I create a layer on top of everything and simply draw it out. I not only plan out the form of the warping fabric, but the shadows that they cast as well.

08 **Separating light and shadow:** After drawing out the complex folds of the fabric, the next step is to paint the overall shadow shape and overall light shape in their own respective new layers. The way light reacts with the type of fabric that I plan on painting is very complicated, so it is best to start with the big shapes and work my way into the little variations within them. ▶

---

03 Establishing shadow colors while staying within the confines of the big, dark value-grouping

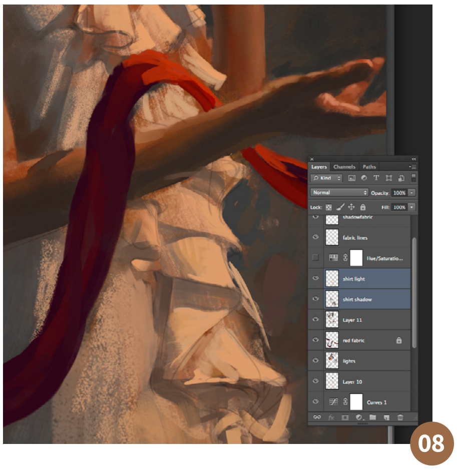
04 Establishing colors of the lit areas while staying within the confines of the value grouping

05 Creating a silky custom brush to block in soft materials, such as hair

06 Using the newly-created silky brush to block in the colors of the hair and face

07 Drawing out the complicated fabric folds and their resulting shadows

08 Simplifying the fabric colors into simple shadow and light tones in separate layers


Layers
Channels
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Kind
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
shadowfabric
fabric lines
Hue/Saturatio...
shirt light
shirt shadow
Layer 11
red fabric
lights
Layer 10
Curves 1

08

Those variations are made simpler by having the light and dark masses on their own layers. Create a new layer for the variation above the light or dark mass-shape layer, and then link it by Alt-clicking between the two in the Layers window.

09 **Being lazy (a.k.a. 'smart'):** I am now in need of another custom brush, but this time it will be used for making repetitive objects less tedious to paint; the condensed ruffles at the top of the blouse, in this case.

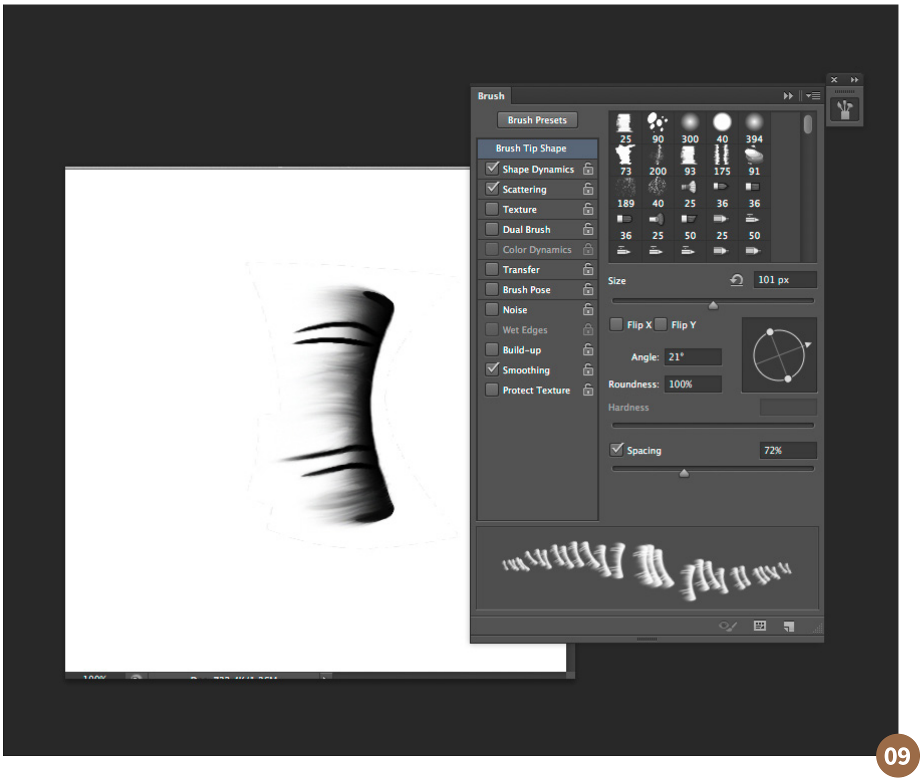
On another small blank document, I paint the shape of one ruffle, and define that as a brush preset. In the brush settings, I adjust the spacing between each ruffle generated until it is how I desire it, and I enable the Angle Jitter, just so it doesn't produce a perfectly straight mechanical rail of ruffles. It needs to look organic and natural.

10 **Color correction:** Throughout these steps, I am constantly jumping all over the place in the painting, going back and forth, refining, and repainting. Creating a painting is not a straight 'point A to B' ordeal; there is a lot of back and forth that happens.

At this point in the painting, I realize that the skin is looking a bit too yellow when compared to the color sketch I did in step one. In order to fix this, I create a new layer and set it to Color mode on a low opacity. In it, I paint a saturated red, and then use a layer mask to hide the red where I don't want so much of it (click the circle within the square icon on the Layers panel to apply a layer mask to the currently active layer).

11 **Background check:** The background was feeling sort of flat and uninteresting, so I change it at this stage. On a new layer on top of everything (it's probably smarter to make a change like this on the existing background layers at the bottom of the stack, but I did it this way for the sake of keeping my steps in chronological order and easy to follow for this tutorial).

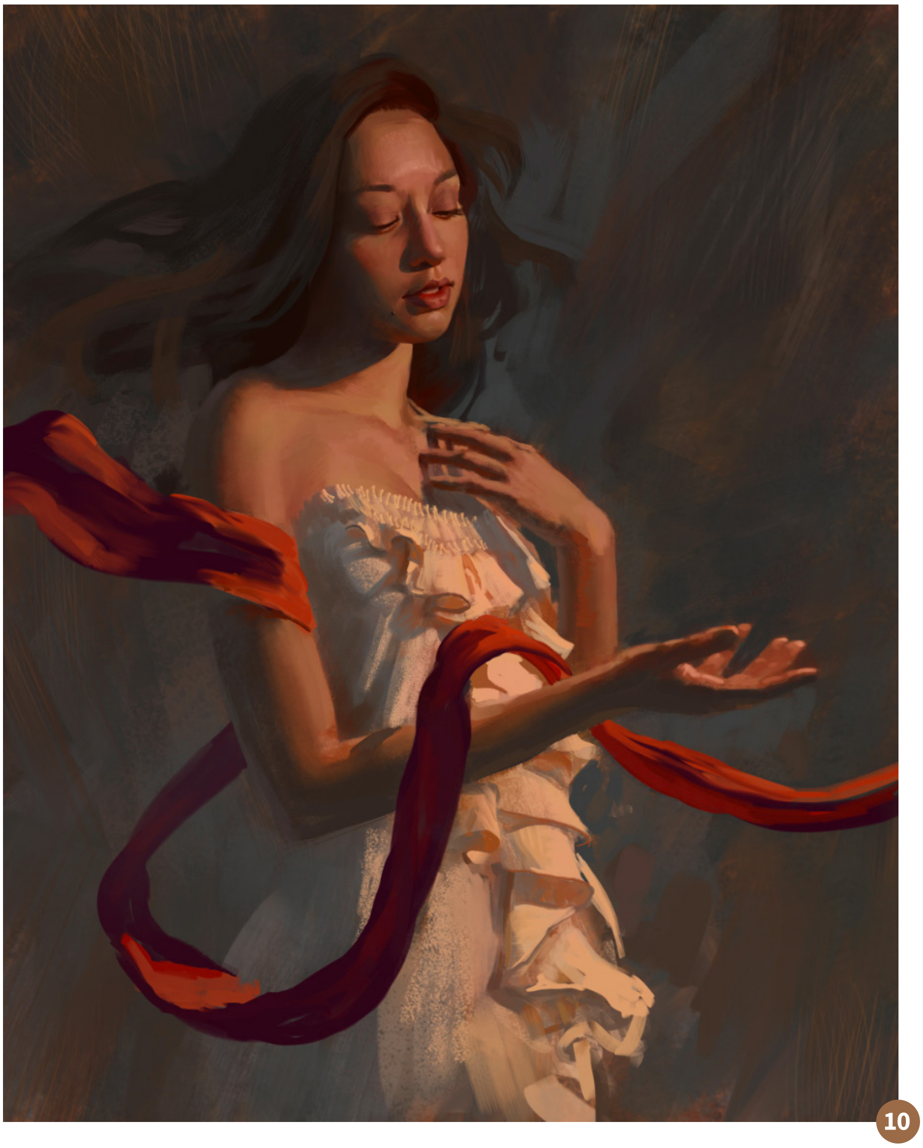
I add some warm tones where I want the cools to pop and some light tones where I want dark shapes to pop. ▶



☑ Shape Dynamics
☑ Scattering
☑ Smoothing
Size: 101 px
☐ Flip X ☐ Flip Y
Angle: 21°
Roundness: 100%
☑ Spacing 72%

09

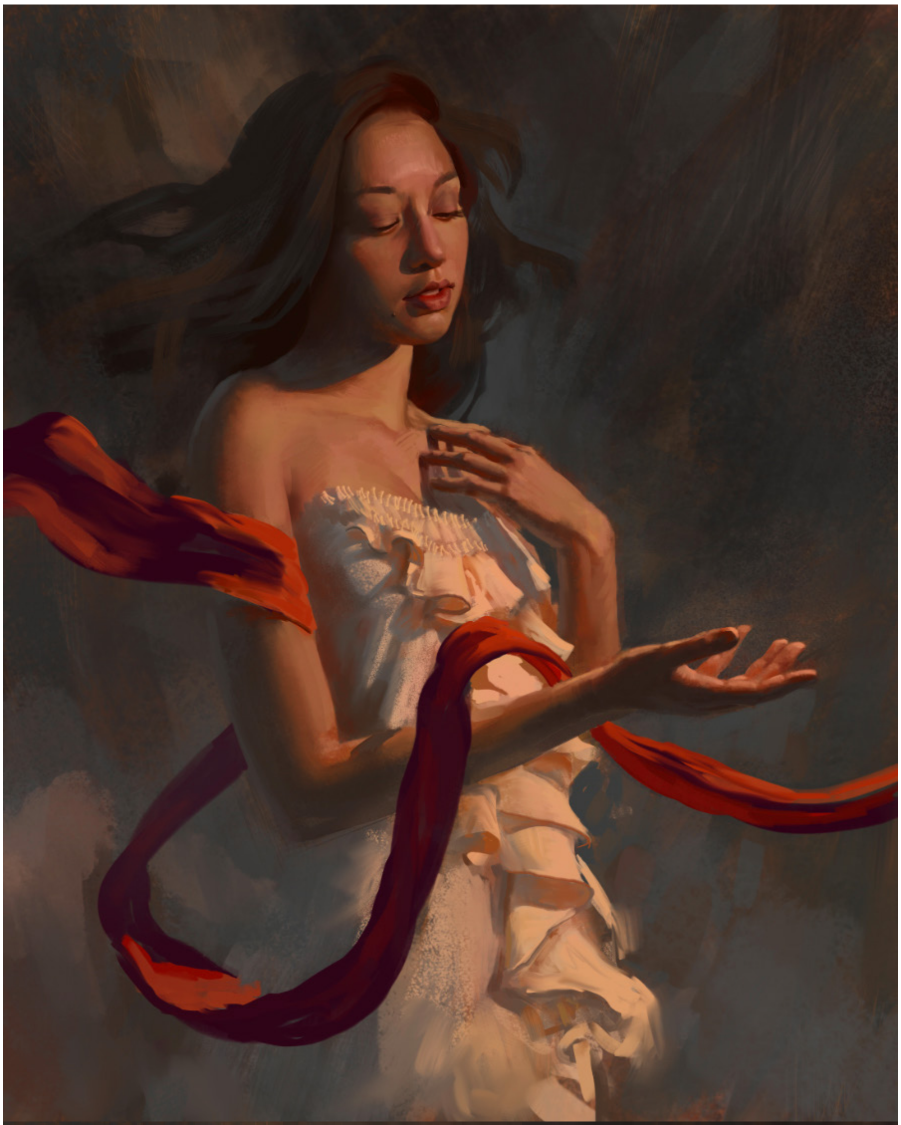
09 Creating a custom brush to paint the ruffles in the fabric

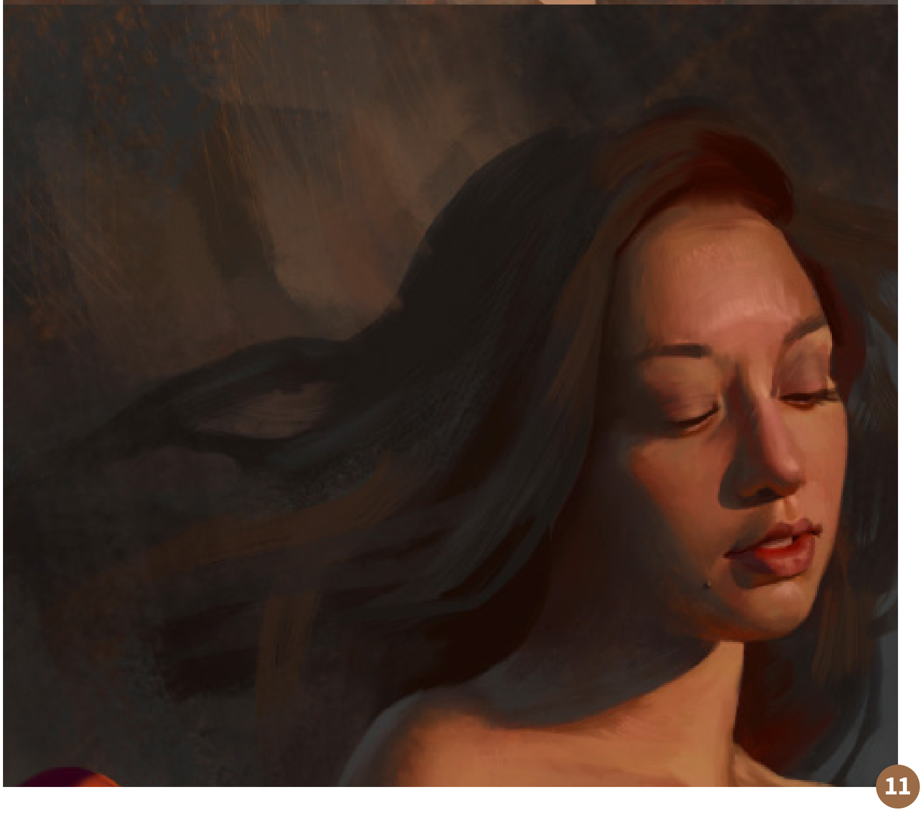


10

10 Adjusting the overall skin color with a Color layer set to low opacity

11 Making the background more interesting and integrated to showcase the figure more effectively





11

PRO TIPS

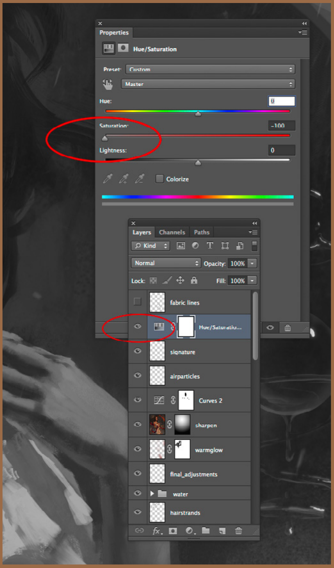
Less really is more

Simplicity – or simplifying, rather – is the key to successful compositions. Paintings can have complex narratives and a lot of objects or figures, but if they are not arranged or grouped well, it will be too chaotic and the viewer could become overwhelmed. That's why it is important to break down the image as simply as possible, usually in the form of only two or three values. If you can make your compositions readable to a viewer within one second of them seeing it, then you're definitely doing something right.

Check your values

Believe it or not, achieving correct color doesn't matter too much in a painting. Values, on the other hand, are incredibly important. If your values are flawless, you can use practically any colors you want and your image will still look good. That's why it's important to constantly be aware of your values.

One trick I use to monitor values is to create a "Hue/Saturation" adjustment layer at the top of my layers panel that I can flick on or off at any time. Having the adjustment layer's saturation setting all the way negative will show you what your painting will look like if it was in grayscale.


Properties
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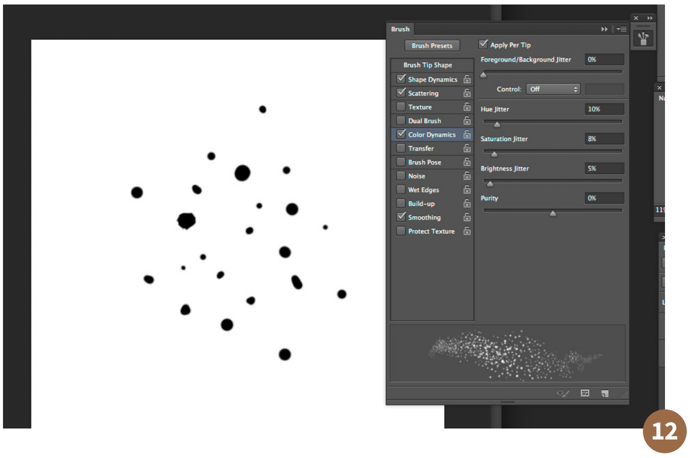
Colorize
Layers
Channels
Paths
Kind
fabric lines
Hue/Saturatio...
signature
airparticles
Curves 2
sharpen
warmglow
final_adjustments
water
hairstrands

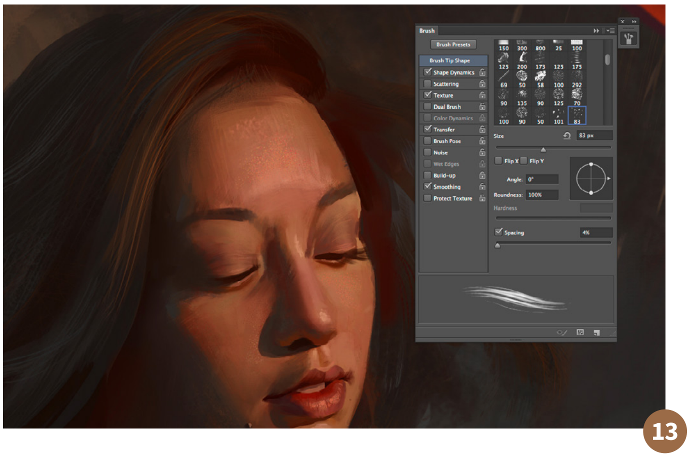
Preset: Custom
Master
Hue: 0
Saturation: -100
Lightness: 0
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%

- Using the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer is a great way to keep an eye on your values



☑ Shape Dynamics
☑ Scattering
☑ Color Dynamics
☑ Smoothing
☑ Apply Per Tip
Foreground/Background Jitter 0%
Control: Off
Hue Jitter 10%
Saturation Jitter 8%
Brightness Jitter 5%
Purity 0%

12



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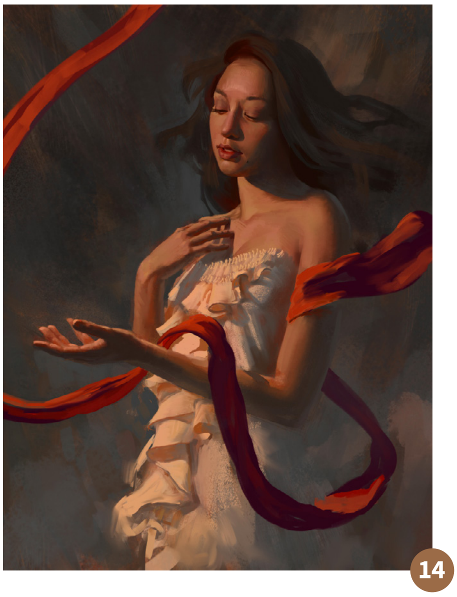
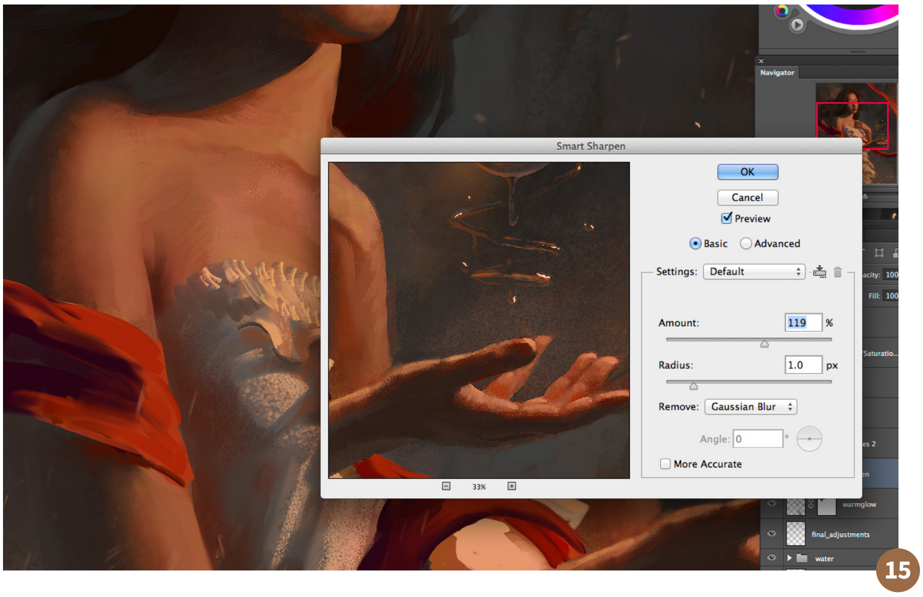
☑ Texture
☑ Transfer
☑ Smoothing
Size 83 px
Angle: 0°
Roundness: 100%
☑ Spacing 4%

13



14



Smart Sharpen
☑ Preview
● Basic ○ Advanced
Settings: Default
Amount: 119 %
Radius: 1.0 px
Remove: Gaussian Blur
Angle: 0°
☐ More Accurate

15

12 Custom skin brush: Using the same steps as before, I create a brush that can be used to apply subtle texture to the skin. A few simple dots on a small blank document, enables scattering and a bit of color dynamics (all found in the Brush window), and the brush is ready to be used.

13 The magical brush: The great part about the skin brush I created in the previous step is that it can be used as a hair-strand brush if the settings are tweaked. Simply turn off scattering, lower the spacing significantly, and set the Jitter size to Pen Pressure. And voila!

Finding creative uses for similar brushes is a valuable skill to have, and it's fun discovering new possibilities for brushes you've been using for a long time. For creating different densities of hair-strand brushes: the more dots the preset has, the more strands it will create i.e. it will be denser.

14 Last piece of the puzzle: The composition still does not feel complete to me at this point. To see the painting with new eyes, I often flip the canvas horizontally (Image > Image Rotation > Flip Horizontal). Balancing issues can become much more apparent when they are seen from a new perspective like this.

While in the flipped state, I try adding a few more shapes to the composition: One more piece of red fabric in the upper corner to keep our eye within the composition, and floating air particles to add small elements and give an even greater sense of motion to the scene. I flip the canvas back to its original orientation to see if I am satisfied with the changes I have made.

15 The finishing touches: The last things I do to my paintings are routine for almost every single painting I create.

1. Copy and merge all visible layers (Cmd+Alt+Shift+E), apply a Smart Sharpen filter (Filter > Sharpen > Smart Sharpen), then apply a layer mask to it and paint out areas that are not the focal points.

2. On top of everything, create a Curves adjustment layer by clicking on the icon at the bottom of the Layers panel that looks most like the Yin/Yang symbol, then select Curves from the drop-down menu that pops up. You can then make adjustments to the overall values.

I then put my signature on it and call it done! I hope you enjoyed gaining a bit of insight into my painting process, and hopefully you've learned some new techniques to experiment with in your own paintings! ●

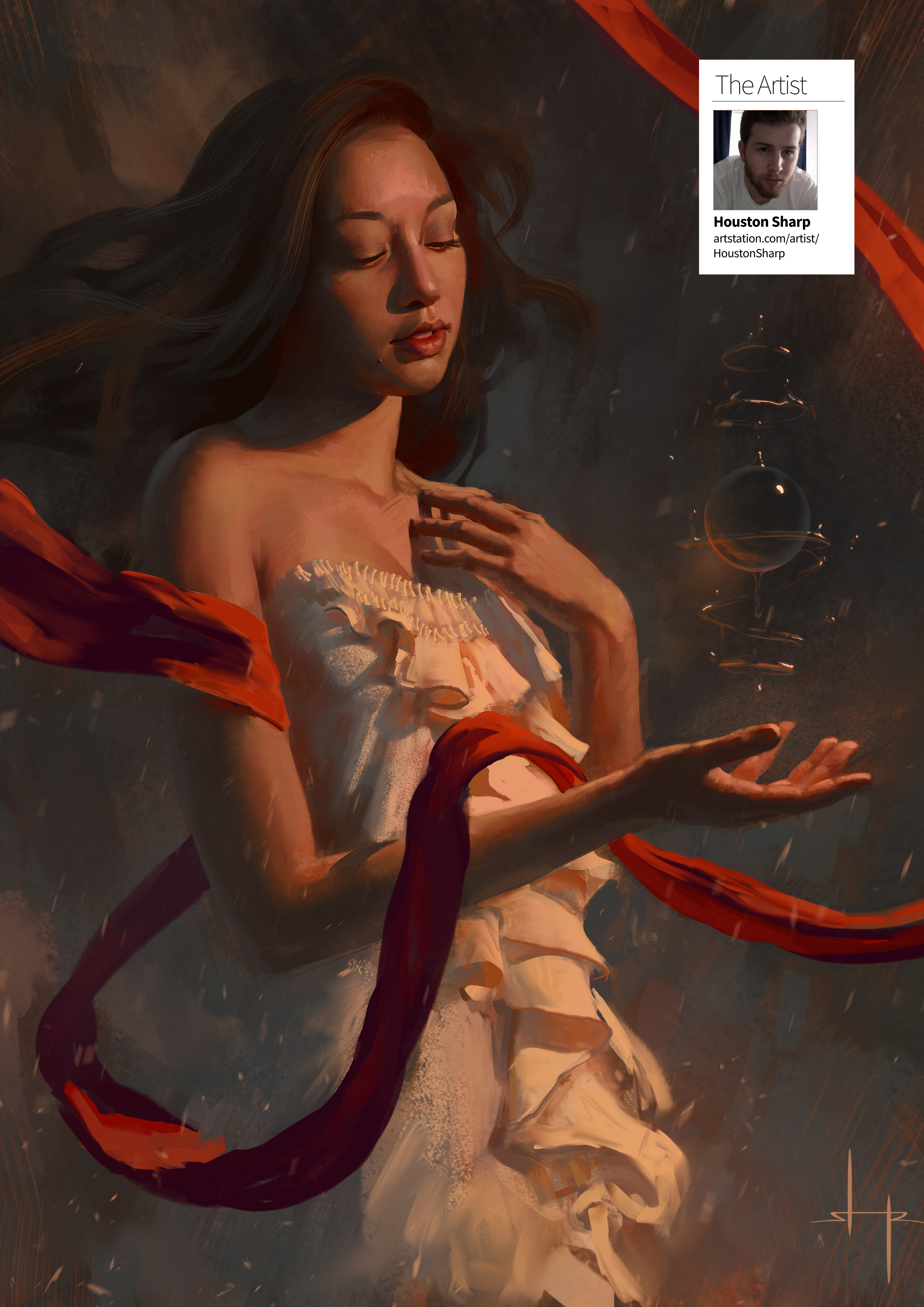
---

12 Creating a skin texture brush

13 Changing the settings of the skin brush to utilize it to create strands of hair

14 Flipping and/or rotating the canvas makes issues within the painting become more apparent

15 Adding finishing touches: a Sharpen layer, adjusting the overall values, and finally, my signature



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101

Issue 101 | May 2014

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Learn to paint standout features

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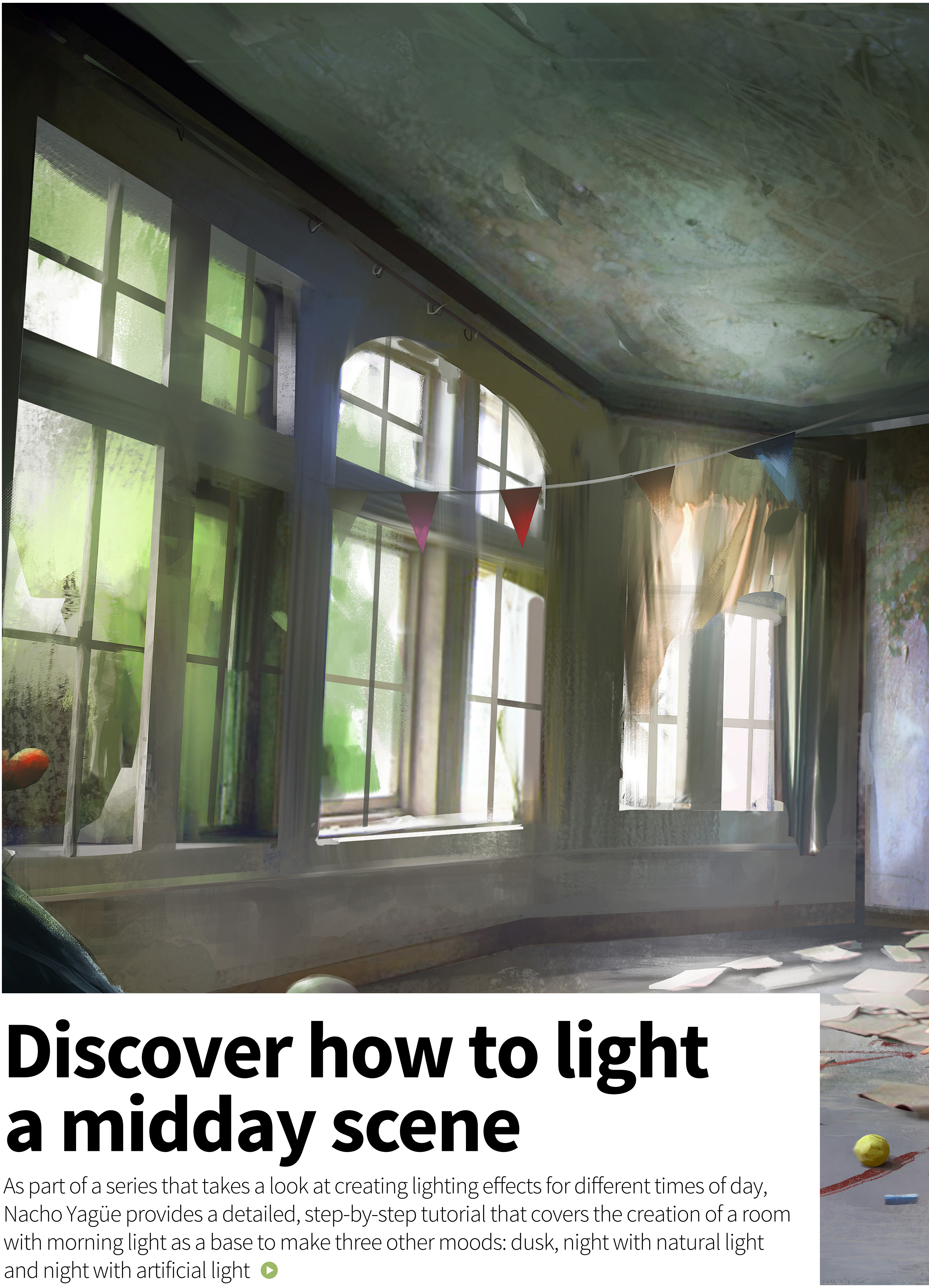
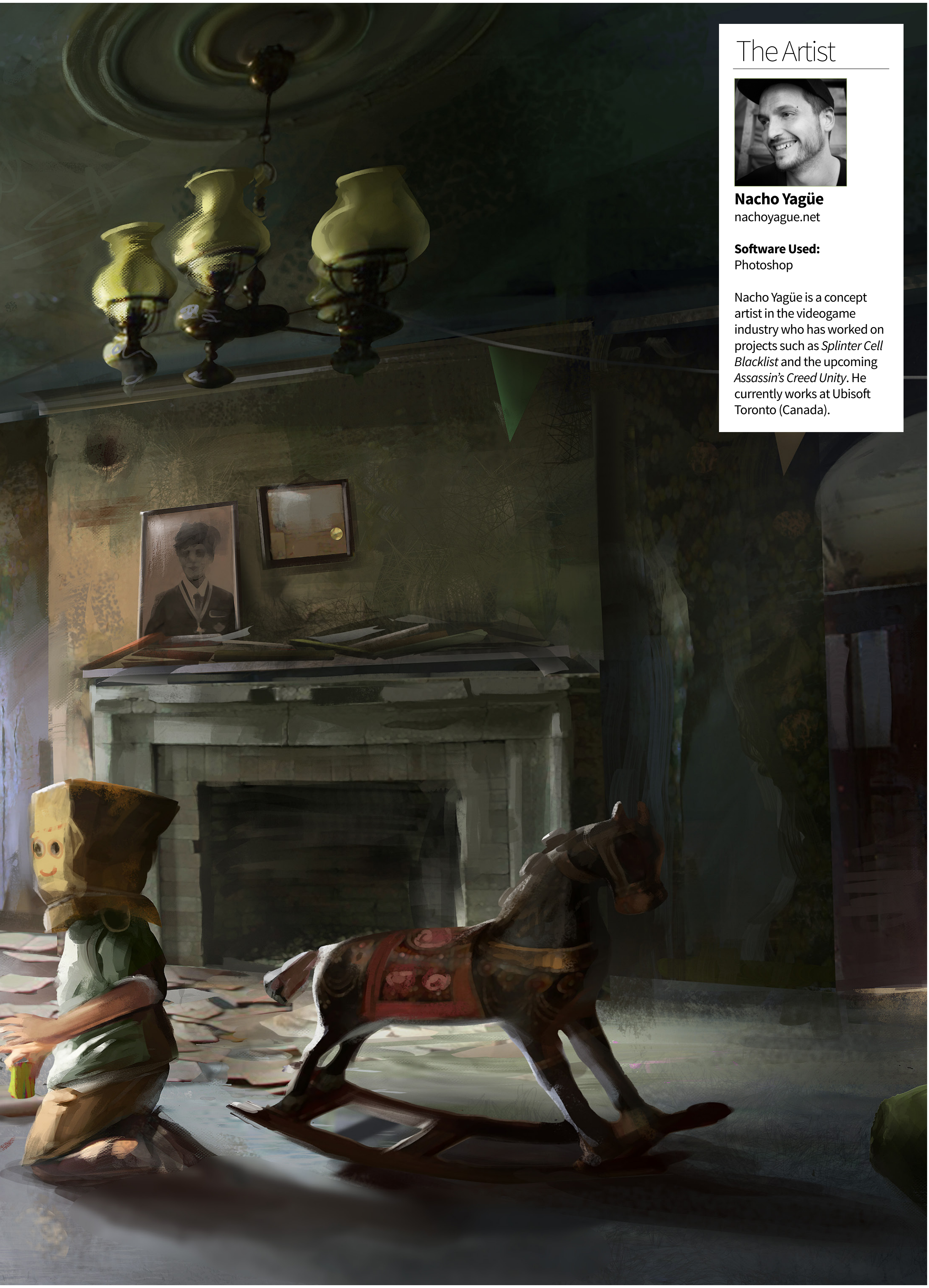


Discover how to light a midday scene

As part of a series that takes a look at creating lighting effects for different times of day, Nacho Yagüe provides a detailed, step-by-step tutorial that covers the creation of a room with morning light as a base to make three other moods: dusk, night with natural light and night with artificial light



The Artist

Nacho Yagüe
nachoyague.net

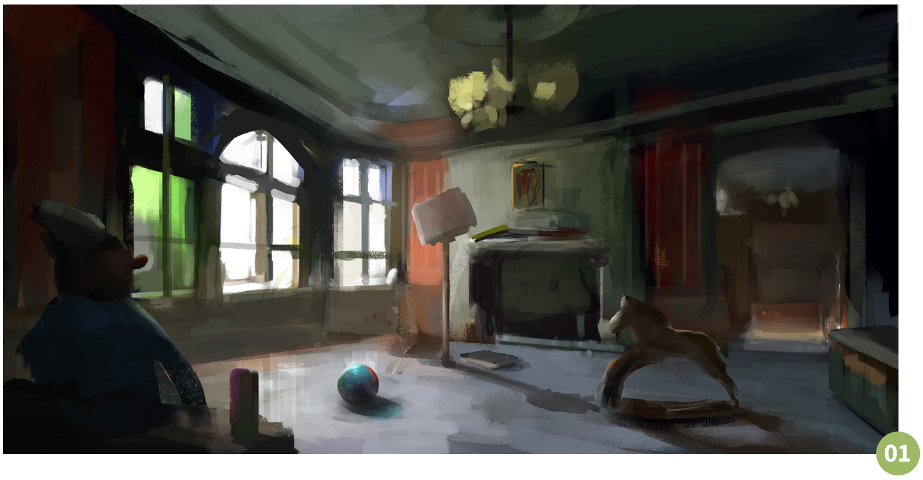
Software Used:
Photoshop

Nacho Yagüe is a concept artist in the videogame industry who has worked on projects such as *Splinter Cell Blacklist* and the upcoming *Assassin's Creed Unity*. He currently works at Ubisoft Toronto (Canada).

Discover Photoshop techniques to depict a scene lit at midday...

In this tutorial, I will create a scene that will be used as the base for three other moods with the same content. The first scene depicts a room in the early morning, and will change as the time of day and lighting shift, keeping the same subject.

Working in videogames requires you to work quickly, and mood changes like these happen often. I will show you how I organize my layers to make this process easier and more efficient. I will also teach you the techniques needed to make these changes in a short period of time.



01

01 Sketch: I don't always start with a sketch. Sometimes I use photos as a reference or start from scratch. In this case, I want to make a quick sketch to set the overall mood and build up the scene with all the elements that will help develop the other moods.

I thought an abandoned room would work with what I wanted to achieve, with windows big enough to add natural light and key elements that will help distinguish the other moods.

02 Color base and perspective: Following the previous sketch, I start preparing the piece by adding the color base and perspective lines that will put all the elements into context. I group the perspective layers, so that I can easily hide them.

I work with big brushes with some texture, focusing only on tone and values. I try not to get crazy with shadows and light at this point, as I will apply them later. Some elements may change, but I try to stay as close to the original image as I can. I switch the image to black and white several times to see if the values are correct.

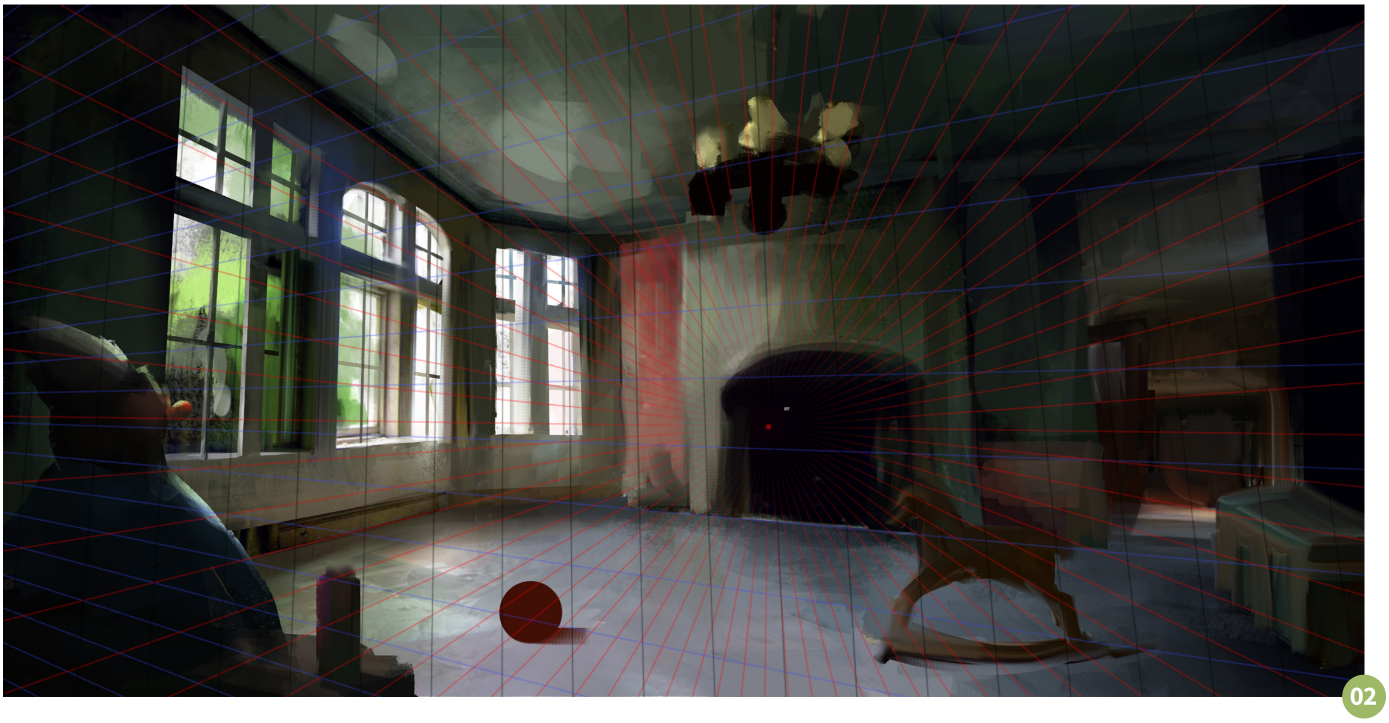
03 Layer setup: This is one of the most tedious, yet important, steps. I don't always work like this. In fact I consider myself very messy when I organize layers in my personal art, but when it's work for a client, it's better to be organized so you'll be able to make changes without much effort.

Once I'm happy with the image, and before I start detailing, I cut out the image and separate every element into layers. The floor, background, window frames, walls and so on, will be cut and pasted in a new layer. Sometimes I'll group some layers (select layers and press Ctrl+G) for more complex elements, for example the windows of the left side are in a group of four layers (background, frame, wall and curtain). I use the Lasso tool to select the area I want to cut and then copy it on a new layer (Ctrl+J).

I also make sure I name each layer so that they will be easier to identify when I have a large number of them.

Now that everything is well organized and separated, it is very easy to render and have full control of every single element on the screen.

04 Polishing and texturing: I like to paint with long and big brushstrokes, so I use the Lasso tool to make sharp edges and leave the inside loose with random brushstrokes. I never paint on the same layer, instead I use Clipping masks so I can paint only the visible areas of the layer underneath, keeping its transparency and shape. The original layer remains unaltered so



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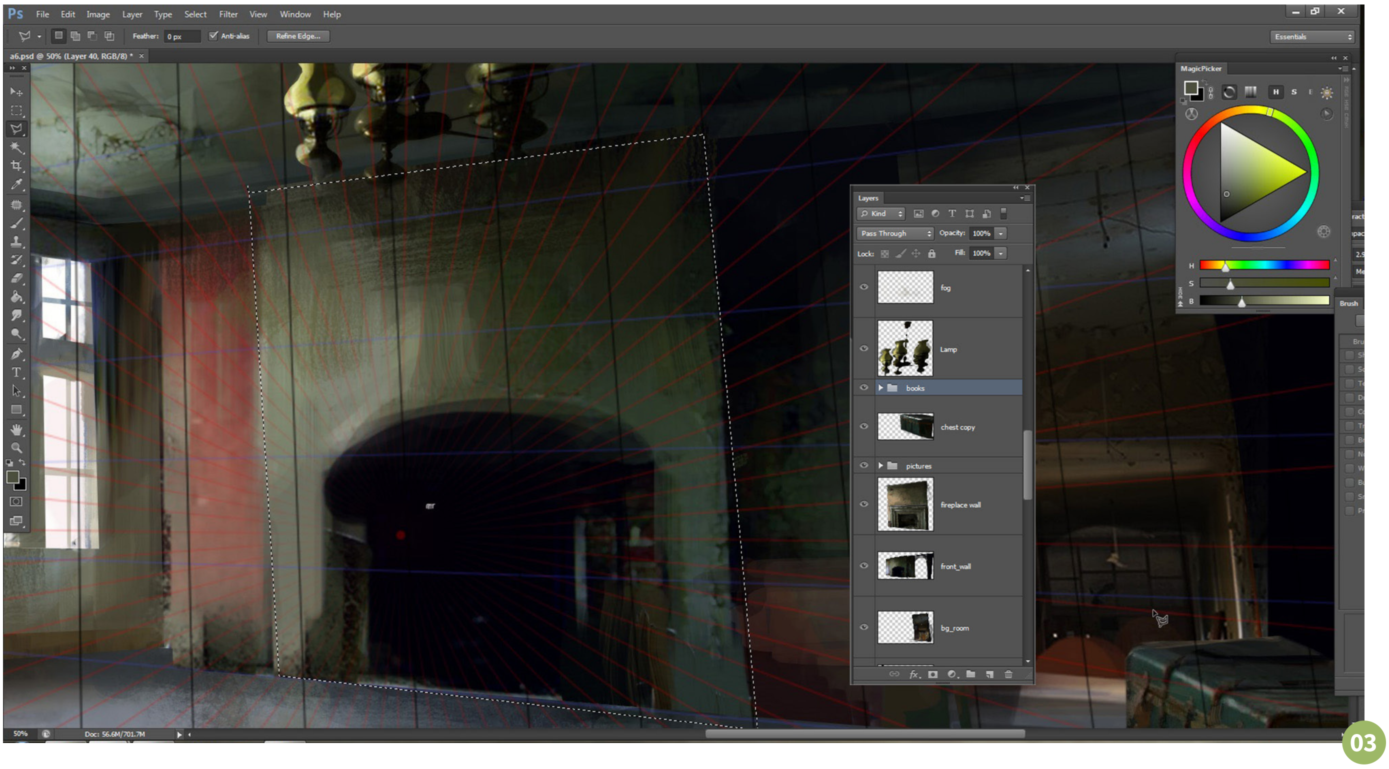
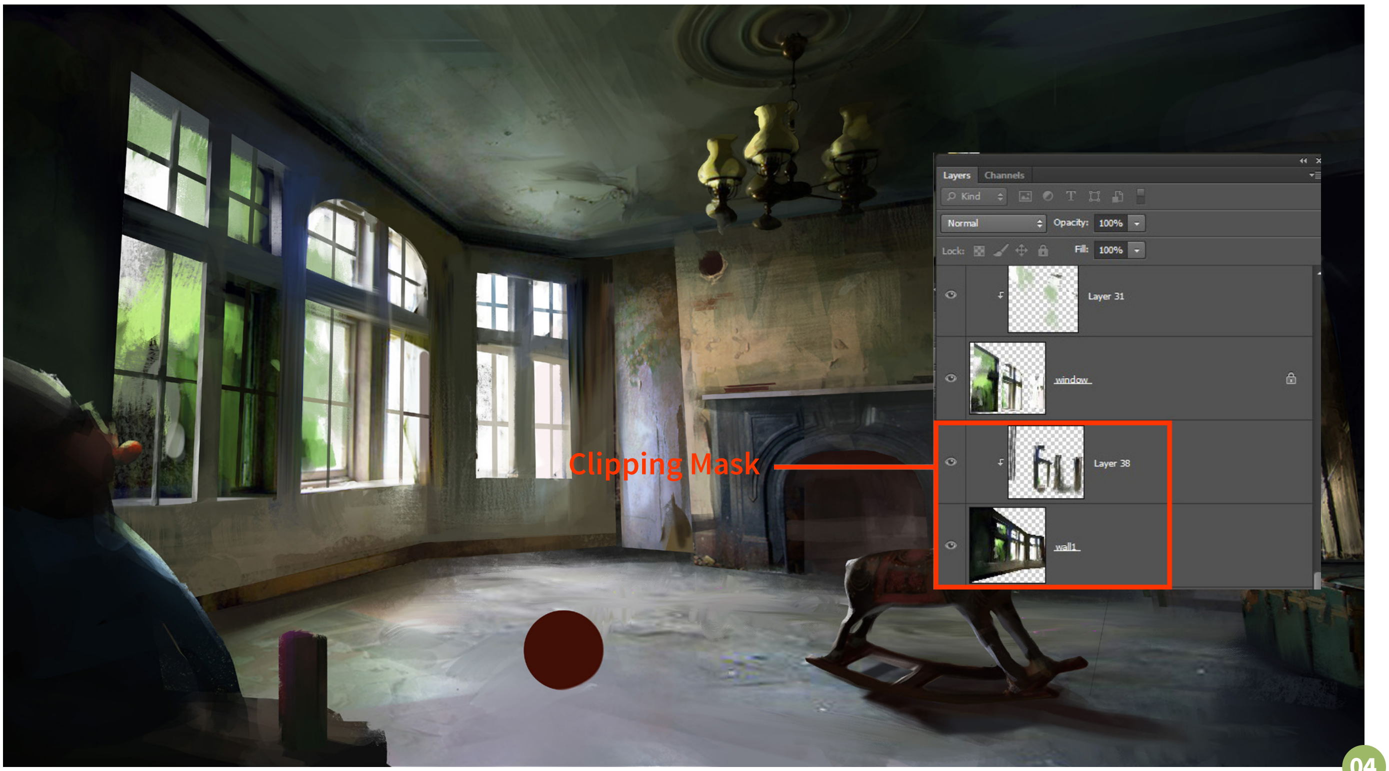

Layers
fog
Lamp
books
chest copy
pictures
fireplace wall
front_wall
bg_room
MagicPicker
03

Pass Through Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%


Clipping Mask
Layers
Channels
Layer 31
window
Layer 38
wall1
04

Normal Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%

I can come back to its original state whenever I want. I can reshape and edit the base layer, and the changes are reflected with the clipping mask. In addition, I can have more than one clipping mask on the same layer.

At this stage, I also add some photo textures. I don't like the feel of a very polished image with too much detail, so I add textures at an early stage and then paint over them. I only use them to add color information and some color noise.

01 **The initial sketch to set the first mood, and building the scene with all the elements I want to show**

02 **Adding the color base and perspective lines. The value range and tones should also be defined here**

03 **Organizing the image by cutting and pasting all the elements into different layers**

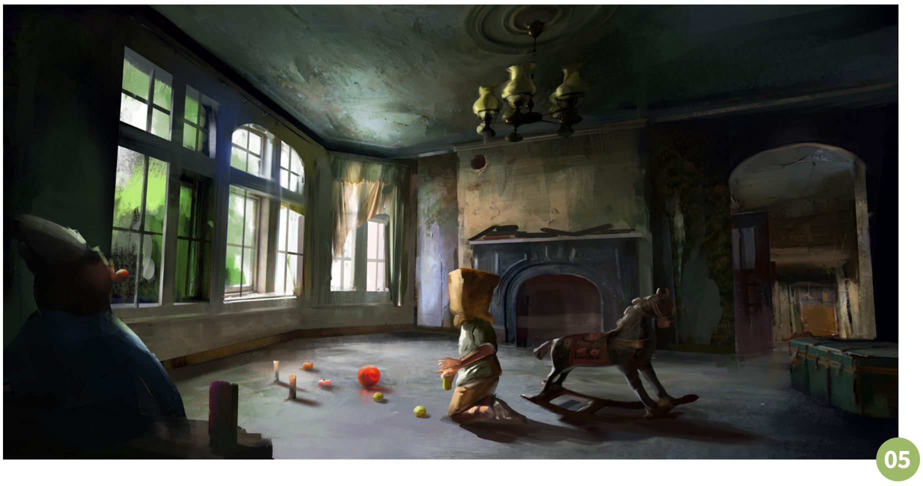
04 **Adding the first textures and polishing the image using clipping masks and photo textures**

> "It's very important to check your values and the composition weight from time to time"

05 **Adding a narrative:** While painting the scene, I feel it lacks a storytelling element. I always like to incorporate some sort of story in my paintings, so the viewer can wander through the image and ask questions about what's going on.

I want the room to look like it is decaying, but I feel that the image alone isn't strong enough to catch the viewer's eye, so I add a character. It is very open to interpretation – it could be a kid or the ghost of a kid wandering around the room. The idea is strong enough to make the viewer look at the image longer and think about the nature of the character and the room he is in.

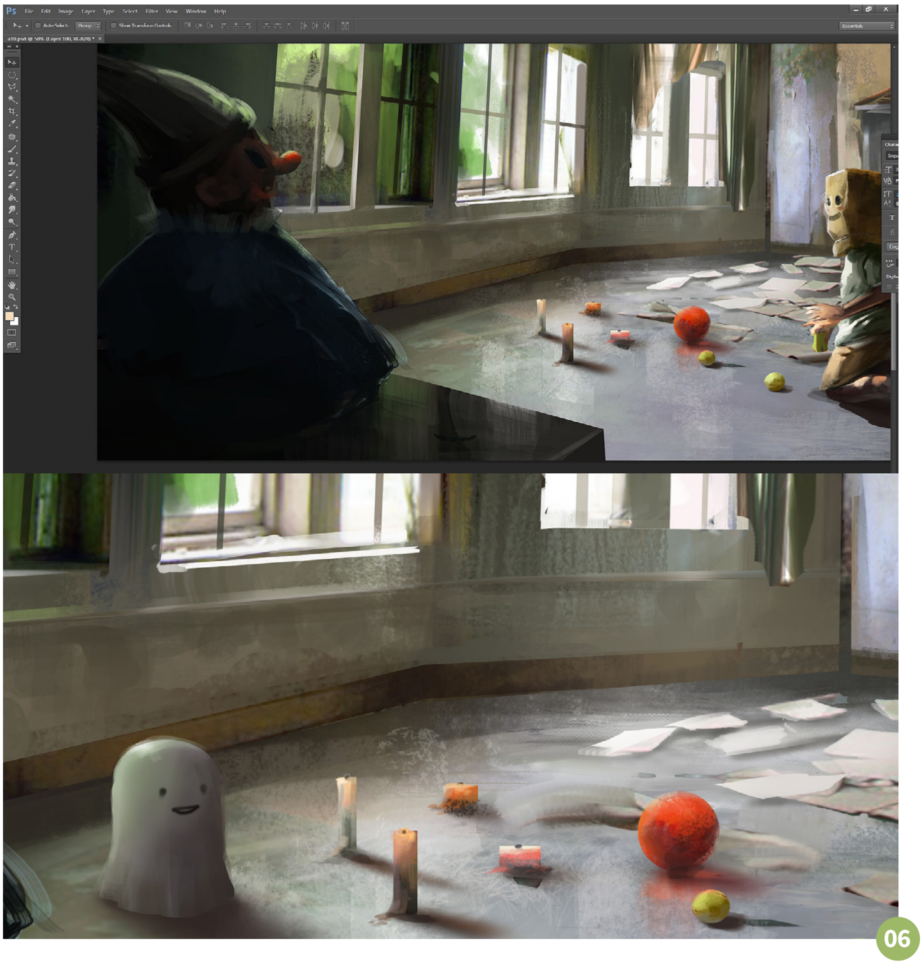
From there, I keep adding more elements to polish and define the shapes. I apply shadows on all the different layers, so I can easily modify them when I have to change the mood.


05

06 **Material behavior:** At this stage I keep rendering all the elements, paying attention to how the light reacts to the environment.

Light affects material in so many different ways. Concrete absorbs more light and won't be very reflective. The plastic ball illuminates some light that will bounce on the floor, coloring its own shadow. The lamp has metallic parts that are very reflective, and so on. It's very important to pay close attention to these details, as they will make your work look more believable.

The best thing you can do is look for pictures on the internet and analyze how light interacts with different surfaces. Here, I use a lot of layers in the Overlay and Screen modes to emulate reflections and bouncing light.



06

07 **Adding lights:** Although I already added some lights to the scene, I usually add the main lights and shadows with adjustment layers. For this image, I make a new adjustment layer mask set in Curves mode. The benefits of adding light and shadows this way is that you can go back and tweak the effect whenever you want.

For example, if I feel that the light or shadow is not strong enough – I just have to click on the layer and modify the intensity. These layers work as a mask, so the adjustment only affects the areas you want. The more white you add to the mask, the more visible the adjustment will be.

I continue painting more lights with a soft brush set in Overlay and Linear Dodge mode. Be careful and try not to 'burn' the image.

08 **Last elements:** I keep adding more details to further build interest in the room. I paint some papers all over the floor as well as a new lamp on the right side.

I've been placing all the elements while thinking about how I will light the scene in different moods. I first think to turn on the ceiling lamp for the night scene with artificial light, but feel that this kind of light is boring. Then I think that a lower light source could be a good touch, so I paint a lamp in the right corner.

I keep adding more elements that will add more flavor to the image, like some books and old photos hanging on the fireplace wall. Then I paint a face on the paper bag mask – my idea is to paint a different face on every scene.

09 **Checking the values and composition:** I repeat this step over and over again. It's very important to check your values and the composition weight from time to time. I usually work with mid-range values and use more contrasted ones on specific areas. If the values don't work, the image won't work, no matter how much detail you put in it. Try to be clever and guide the eye to the areas you want by adding more light.

I always have a layer set in Desaturation mode on the top, so I can switch it on whenever I want and check if the values are still working well.

Along with that, I also flip the image horizontally (Image > Adjust > Flip horizontal) several times so I can see if the composition is well balanced.

10 **Last touches:** I feel that the painting isn't creepy enough, so I draw some kind of religious symbol on the floor.

With a soft round brush and a layer set to Screen mode and at 70% Opacity, I keep adding some subtle atmospheric light that will tone down the values a little bit. I try to keep the colors fresh and cold because I want the feeling of an early morning scene.

I correct the colors a little bit using Color Balance, but always try to keep the original tones I set in my previous sketch.

Finally I add some spare brushstrokes to give a more painterly effect, and sharpen the edges a little bit with the Unsharp Mask (Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask) before saving the files. ●

---

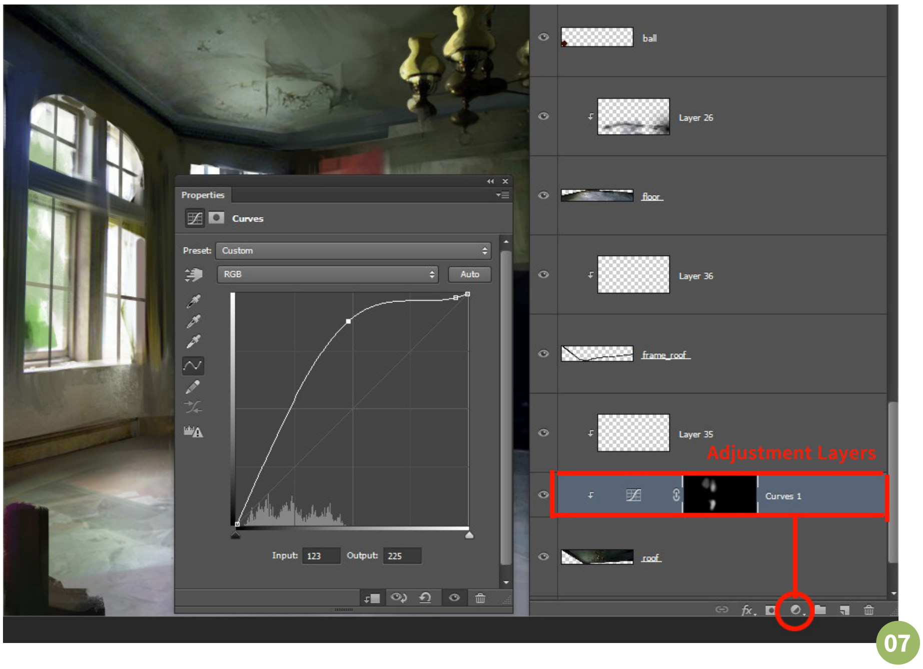
06 **The image lacked a narrative so I add a character to the scene**

07 **Adding reflections and shadows, keeping in mind the nature of the material being rendered**

08 **Using adjustment layer masks to add light and shadow**

09 **Painting more assets that will enrich the atmosphere of the scene**

10 **Check your values and flip the canvas horizontally to detect possible mistakes**

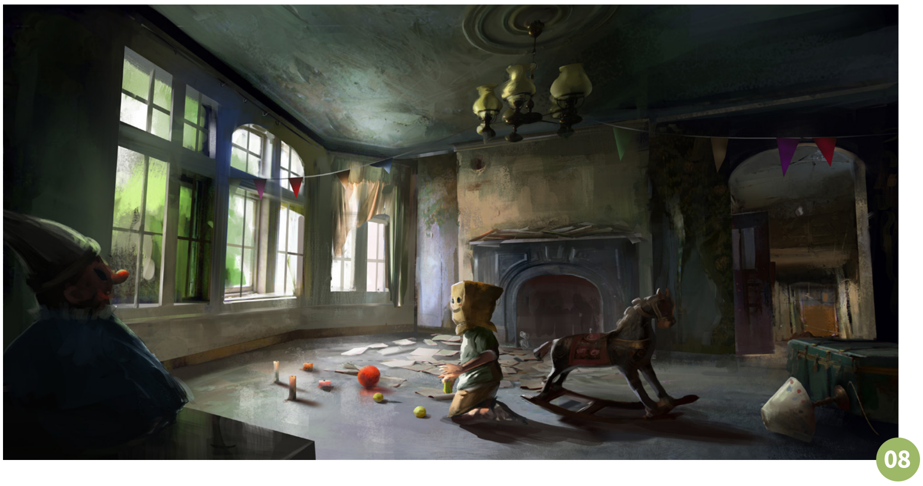


Preset: Custom

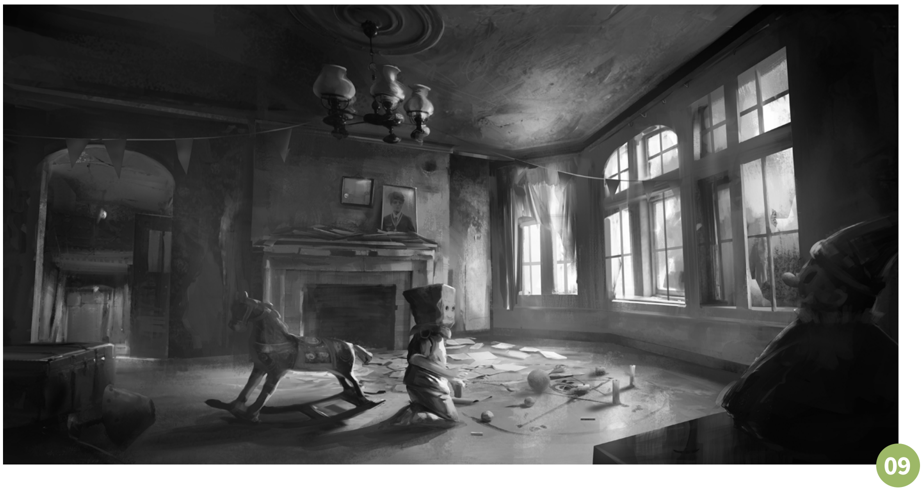
RGB

Input: 123 Output: 225

07



08



09

PRO TIP

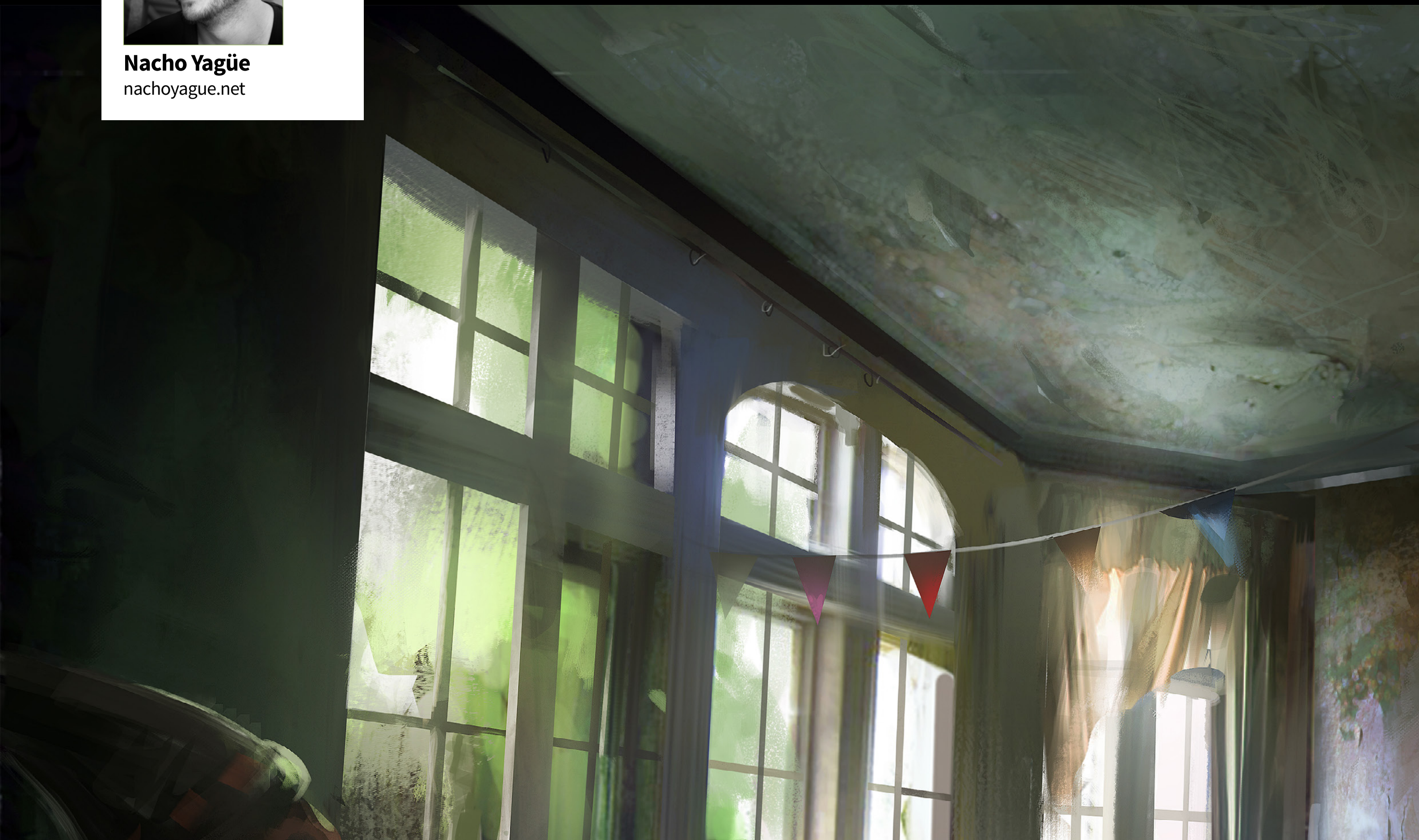
Say something with your image

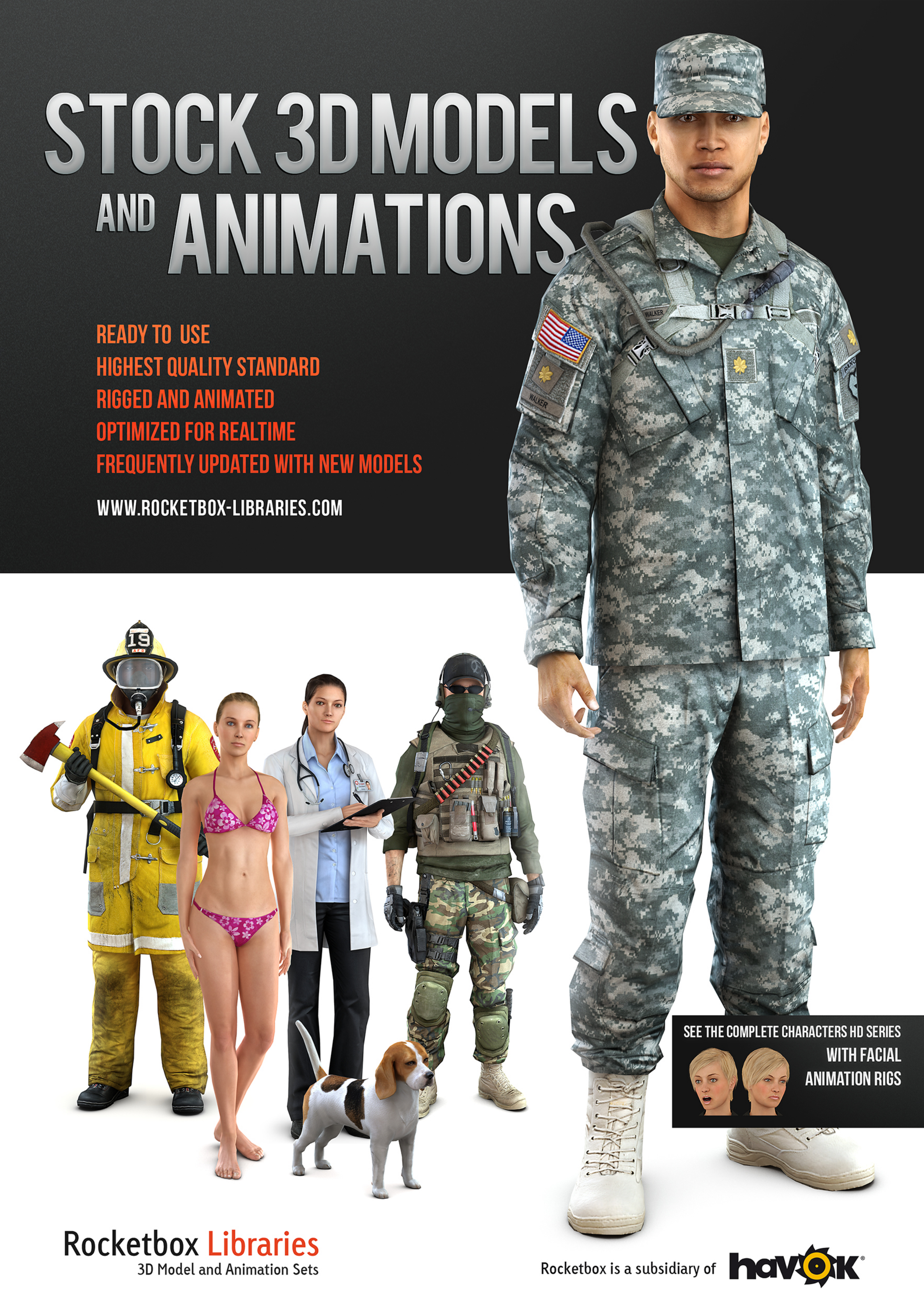
It's not necessary to tell a story on every illustration you make, but it's very important to keep a consistency. Ask yourself the 'Why' and 'How' of everything you put into a scene. Why does this wall have this material and not another? What will the floor look like if the house is abandoned? What kind of elements will tell the viewer that this room is abandoned and once belonged to a kid? It's important to think about these details as they will enrich your image and will give extra flavor.

The Artist

Nacho Yagüe

nachoyague.net





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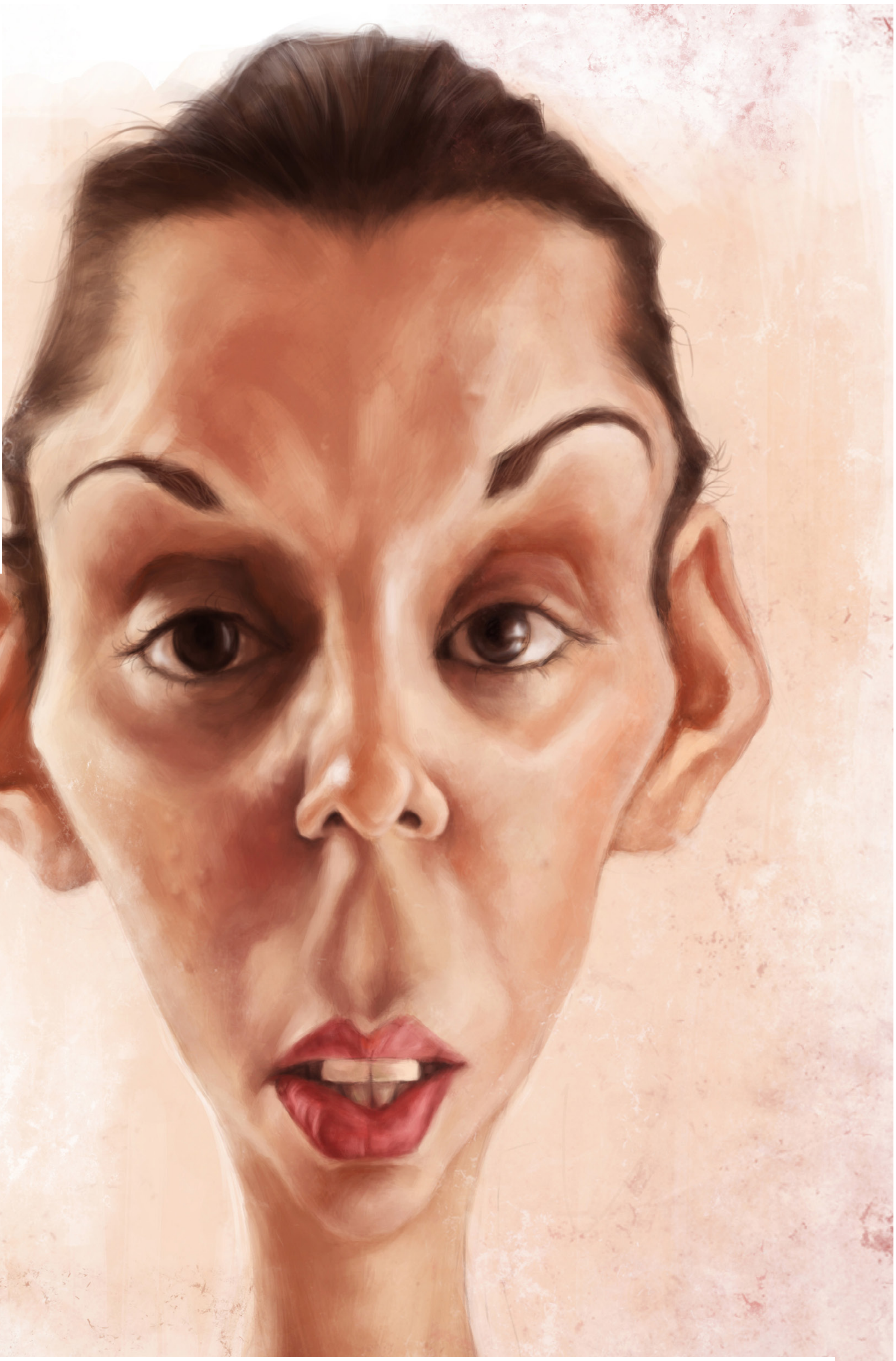
The Artist

Stephen Lorenzo Walkes

artbysteviewalkes.blogspot.co.uk

Software Used:
Photoshop

Stephen is a freelance illustrator based in London, England. His caricatures have been used in editorials, advertising, album covers and books. He is currently the creative director of the independent clothing company, Doopsie Joint.



Learn to paint standout features in Photoshop

Stephen Lorenzo Walkes provides a step-by-step guide for drawing and painting a caricature in Photoshop. With top tips on creating standout features that define caricatures, and using brushes to create a traditional feel to your image, you'll be painting like a pro in no time! ▶

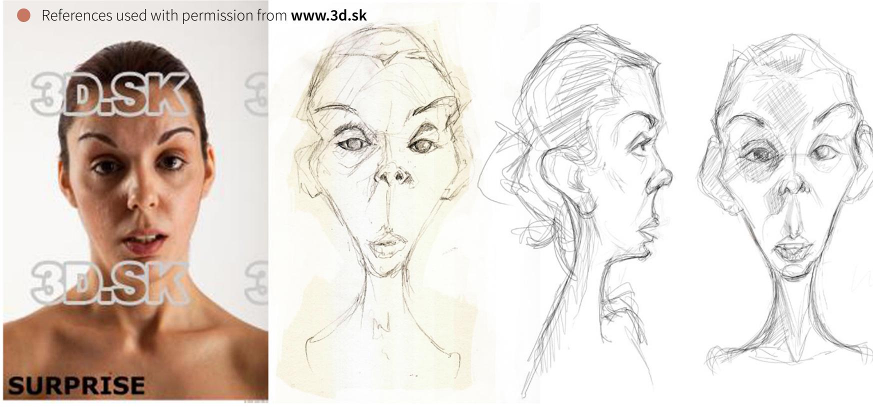
A step-by-step guide to exaggerating female features in Photoshop...

This tutorial will give you an in-depth look into the process I normally use when drawing and digitally painting a caricature.

The steps shared will not only give you an idea of to how I exaggerate the features of the model while maintaining her likeness, but also show how the gradual building up of values can change a quick rough sketch into a strong, eye-catching digital illustration.

Using three standard Photoshop brushes, and five layers, I develop the piece using low brush opacities, and finish with a mixture of soft and bold skin tone colors, directing the point of focus to the model's standout features. I then conclude by using a free downloadable 'dirty' brush, which emphasizes the painting's traditional feeling.

Apart from my first initial sketch, all of the work in this tutorial has been done in Photoshop using the Wacom Cintiq 13HD. I've chosen to use an A4 document size, with the resolution at 300 pixels/inch, and the image mode set to RGB.



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01

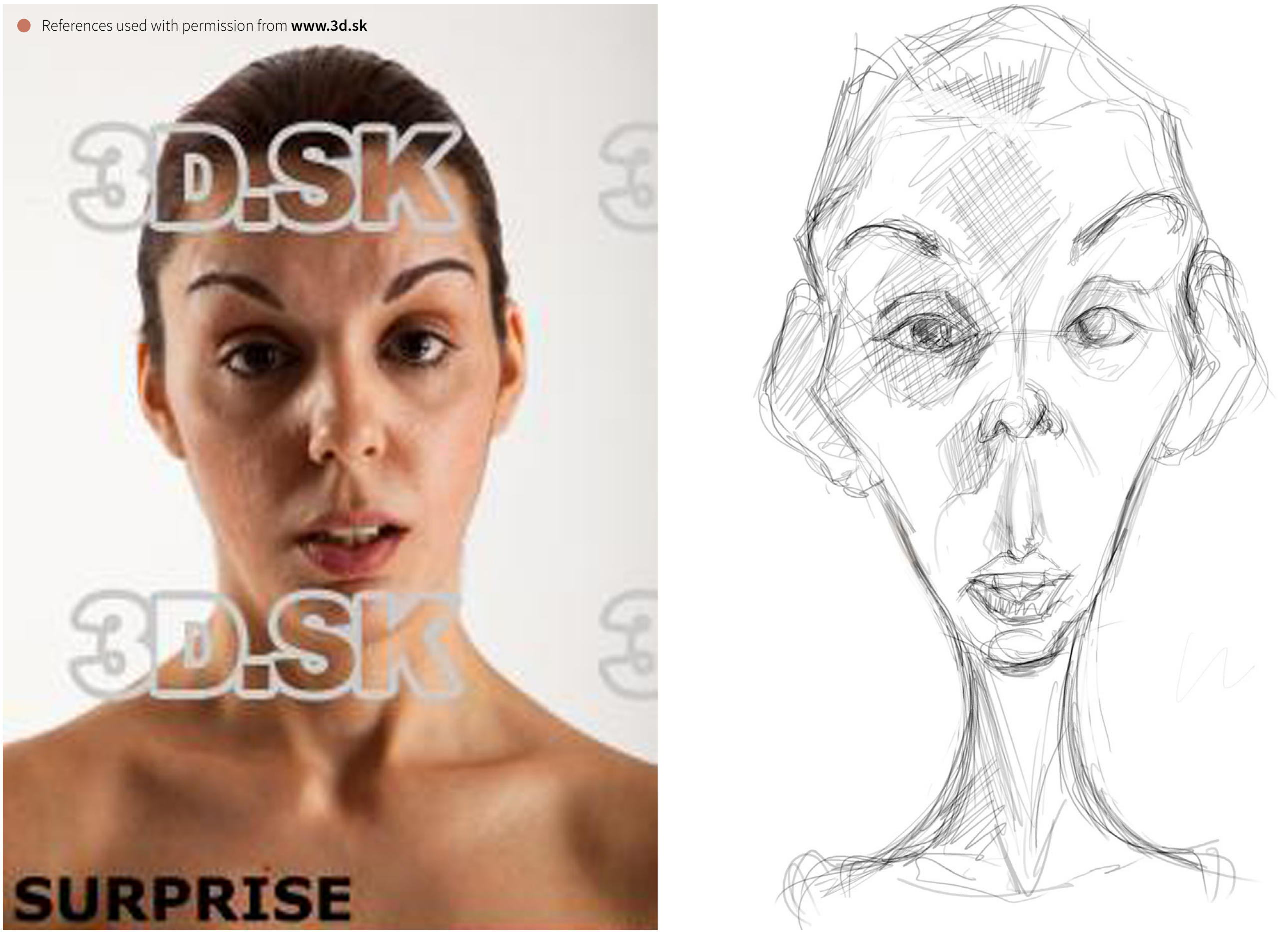
01 Rough sketches: Rough sketches are kind of like little rehearsals for the big event, but without the pressure. They're not supposed to be masterpieces, their sole purpose is to simply allow you to familiarize yourself with the subject's features, and also for you to experiment and explore with shape and exaggeration while remaining true to the likeness. The more reference photos there are to work with, the better.

For preparation of my caricature of Regina, I did three very brief thumbnails. The first sketch for example was lightly drawn in my sketchbook taking roughly around five minutes to do. The outcome was clearly not very strong in likeness, but it played its part by allowing me to see that exaggerating the oval shape of her head, plus pushing the space between her nose and mouth, could potentially work. And that's what these sketches should do; show you new ways to make your caricature work, all through simple shapes.

02 Chosen sketch: After three sketches figuring out how to exaggerate the model's features, I felt that the third sketch would be enough to start my painting.

From studying five reference photos of Regina, four immediate facial features stood out to me. Her big eye lids, her small round mousy nose, the space between her nose and mouth, and the

▶



References used with permission from **www.3d.sk**

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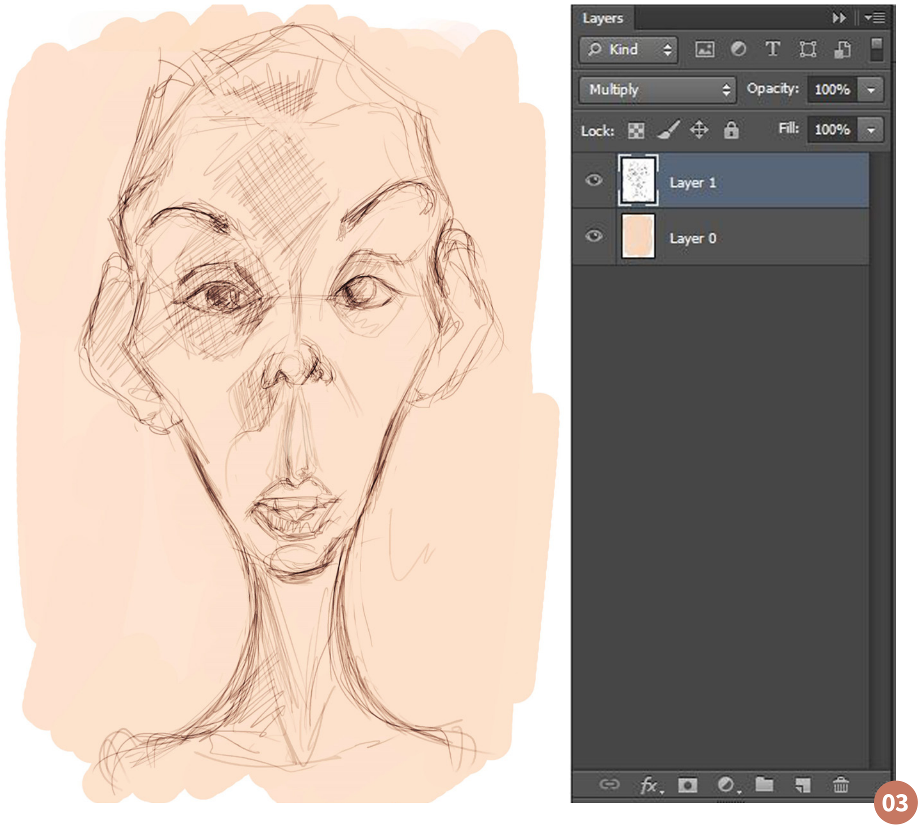
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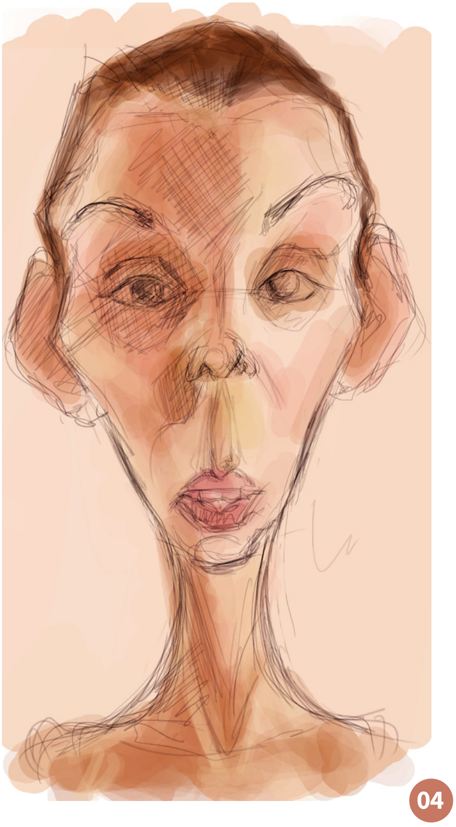

04

> “A very useful tip recommended by many experienced traditional painters is to squint or defocus your eyes in order to blur out distracting details and simplify the image”

slight prominence of her two front teeth. I realized that I captured everything except her eyes with my first attempt. But by my third sketch, I felt that I had enough of her standout features to progress with as my final.

03 **Mid-tones:** At this stage I made a new layer and placed it underneath my sketch as the background layer. I then double-clicked on my sketch layer to unlock it, and set it to Multiply. Selecting the Hard Round brush and lowering the Opacity to 43, I then started to lightly paint in a fleshy pink-brown color on the layer underneath my sketch.

At this point, while painting the areas that I wanted to build my values around, I made sure not to lift my stylus off the pad, simply because I wanted to keep my saturated mid-tone value the same. Taking my stylus off and on again would have darkened the value, which is not what I wanted at this stage.

This is just a personal preference as I feel this gives me a little more control with where I want to focus my color, but another option would be to just fill the whole background layer with a chosen color, and then lower the opacity to what you intuitively feel is the right mid-tone.

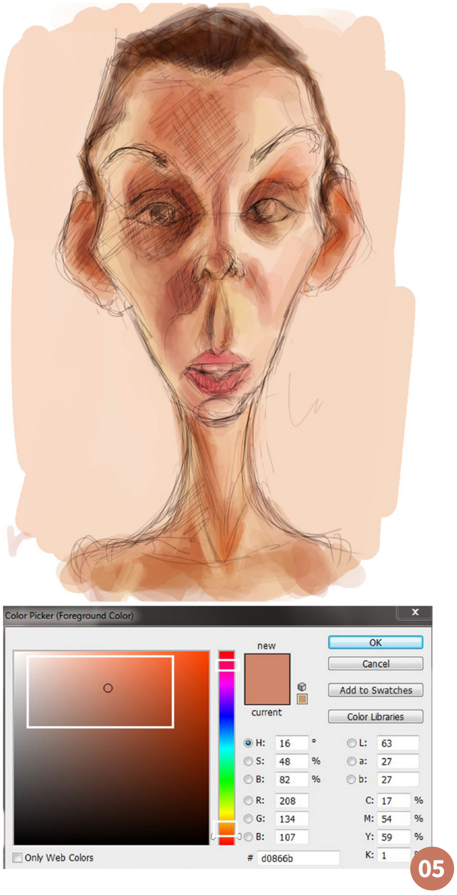
04 **Blocking-in:** A very useful tip recommended by many experienced traditional painters is to squint or defocus your eyes in order to blur out distracting details and simplify the image – this way you'll see the lights and darks of your reference.

This time I didn't really need to do this, because my reference photo was in a fairly low resolution. Normally this is a hindrance, but sometimes it can actually help lose over-dependence on references and improve on your artistic intuition.

Still using the Hard Round brush with the Opacity set to 43, I used the Color Picker to choose a darker value of my chosen mid-tone color and began to block in the darker tones of Regina's face, immediately adding more depth to my previously flat sketch.

05 **Building tone:** Personally I've found creating a color palette next to my painting a little distracting, so I normally target a section of saturated values in the Color Picker's foreground, and softly paint it onto the image.

Looking at the reference photo, I noticed soft yellows, pinks, greens and browns, so raising the color slider, I searched for similar tones through observation and intuition. It doesn't matter if it's not identical to the reference photo. In fact my main goal was for the colors not to be identical, just similar.


Color Picker (Foreground Color)
H: 16 °
S: 48 %
B: 82 %
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G: 134
B: 107
L: 63
a: 27
b: 27
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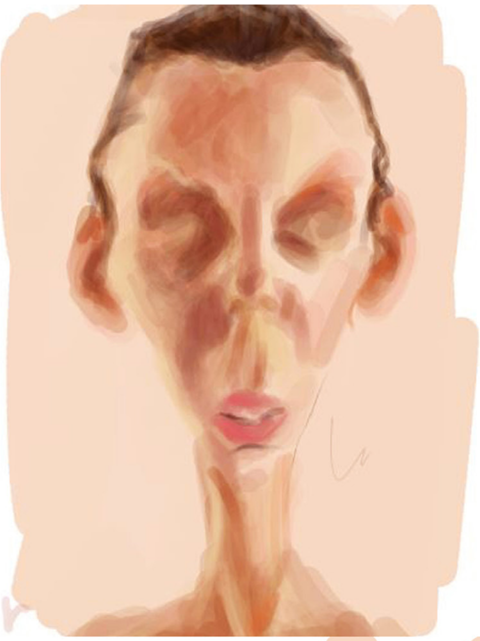
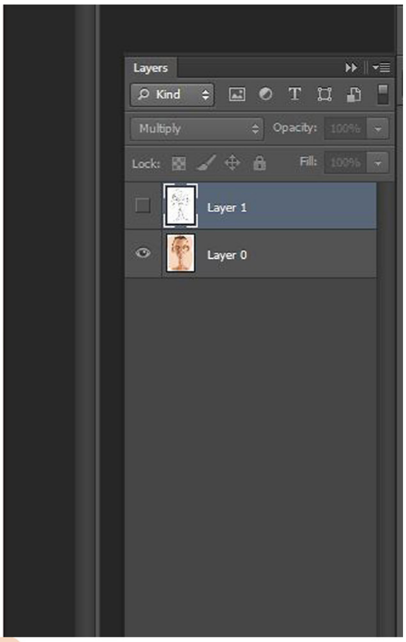
05

With my brush opacity still set low, I don't commit to any strong values no matter how hard I apply





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Lock:

Fill: 100%

Layer 1

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PRO TIP

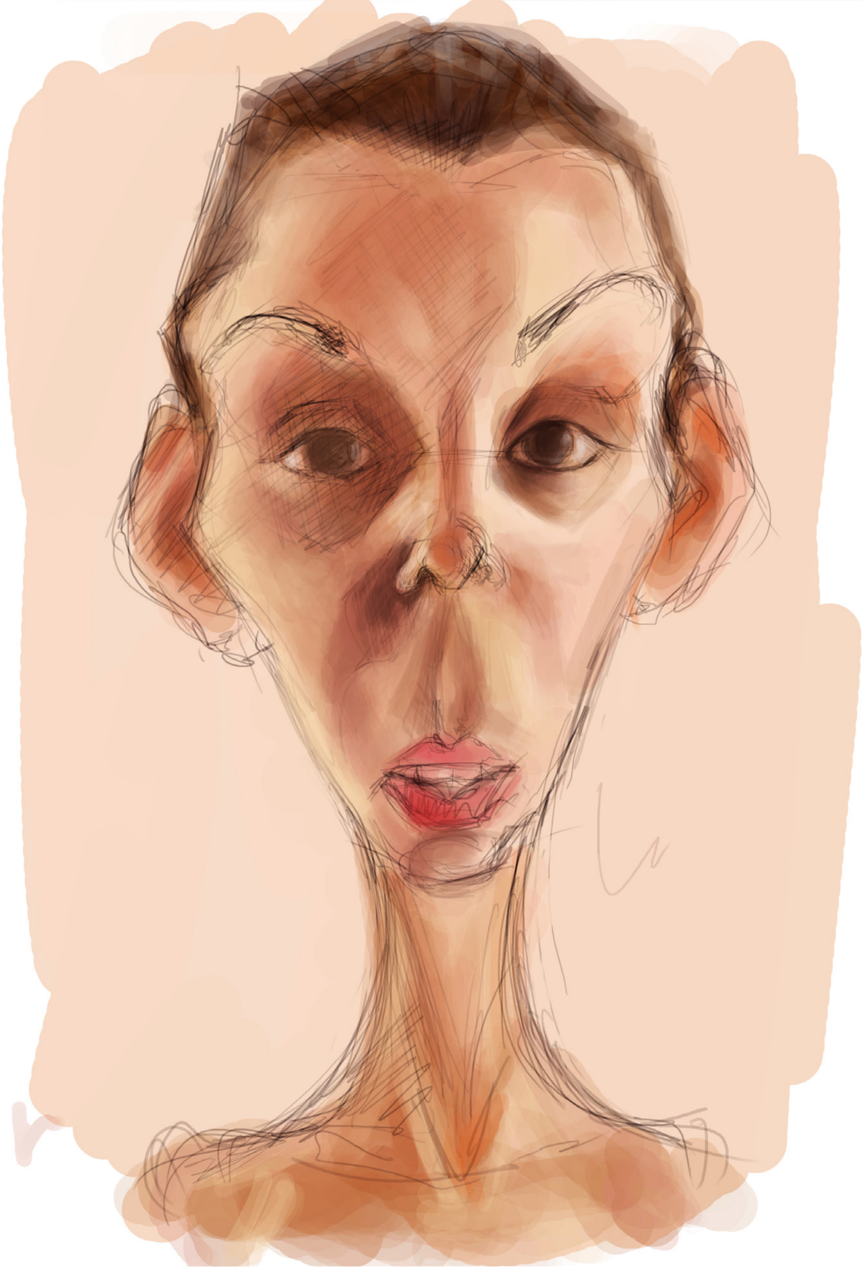
The caricaturist's first steps

Find a style of caricature art that really inspires you, and then dedicate time to practicing how to create it. There are so many amazing caricature artists out there for inspiration, add them as 'friends' on Facebook, and so on. Follow their work. Try to emulate their techniques as a guide for your own. Join caricature communities on social network sites. See how these artists create, and market themselves. Check out as many free tutorials online as possible, and any related videos on YouTube. But always find some time to practice and improve, until you have your own unique style or the beginnings of one at least.

pressure with my stylus. Plus it allows me to experiment with other colors tentatively without committing, sometimes resulting in nice mixtures that add more to the block-in, but ultimately using the painting itself as my palette from start to finish.

06 **Getting stuck in:** The block-in didn't take me too long – roughly around ten minutes. Plus the reference only has a few colors, allowing me to establish rough colors fairly quickly. I felt that I had enough darks and lights to work with. By switching off the sketch layer, I could clearly see Regina's likeness developing through just a small number of warm color choices, and soft light and dark values.

Up to this point I had only been painting underneath my sketch, so the next step was to create a new layer, this time on top of my sketch, and then continue blocking-in. I still used the ▶



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03 A fleshy mid-tone color on a layer underneath the sketch to build upon color values

04 Look for the simple shapes that the light and dark values make

05 Using the actual main piece as the palette to experiment and build upon

06 Slowly developing the painting on top of the sketch instead of under it

Hard Round brush, constantly enlarging and reducing its size with my left hand using the square bracket keys, but never going too small. I also began to play around with the brush opacity, never really going over 70%, or below 50%.

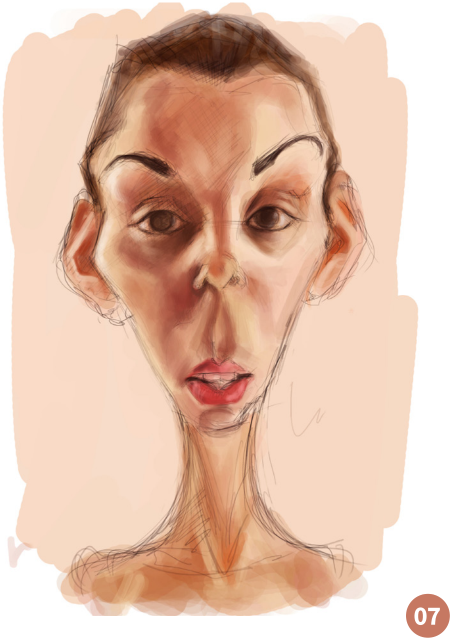
07 **Harmonizing chosen colors:** I began to focus on blending and harmonizing my main colors, painting on top of the sketch. Using the main piece as my palette, I frequently use the Eye Dropper tool to pick out the darks and lights.

At this point I also wanted to emphasize Regina's femininity by adding more saturated reds from the Color Picker; lightly mixing it into darker hues that otherwise appeared more as dark-brown and black in her reference photo.

I also began to start using Brush #24 in order to create a more traditional texture where brushstrokes look more visible. I also haven't zoomed in at all. My prime focus in this step is still mainly about harmonizing colors.

08 **Flipping and reversing:** Gradually, I began to focus more on painting Regina's main features. I constantly rotated between two brushes, the Hard Round for shape, and Brush #24 for texture. I still wasn't completely convinced about the exaggerations and likeness, and felt that I could do a little more to emphasize her facial characteristics.

When not convinced of likeness, one great tip that I picked up from a few of my favorite caricaturists is to reverse the image. Flipping or reversing the artwork and reference photo immediately helps to highlight any mistakes and discrepancies. It's all to do with how the dominant side of your brain interprets the image. Ever since I began to do this, my artwork has improved drastically. In this case, it allowed me to notice that I was exaggerating one side of Regina's cheek bone way too much in contrast with the other.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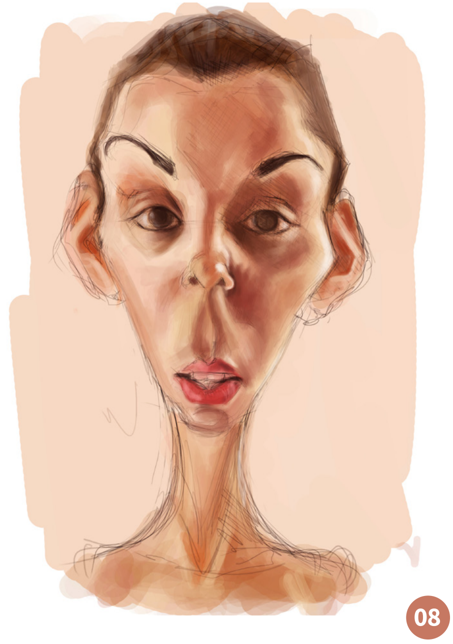
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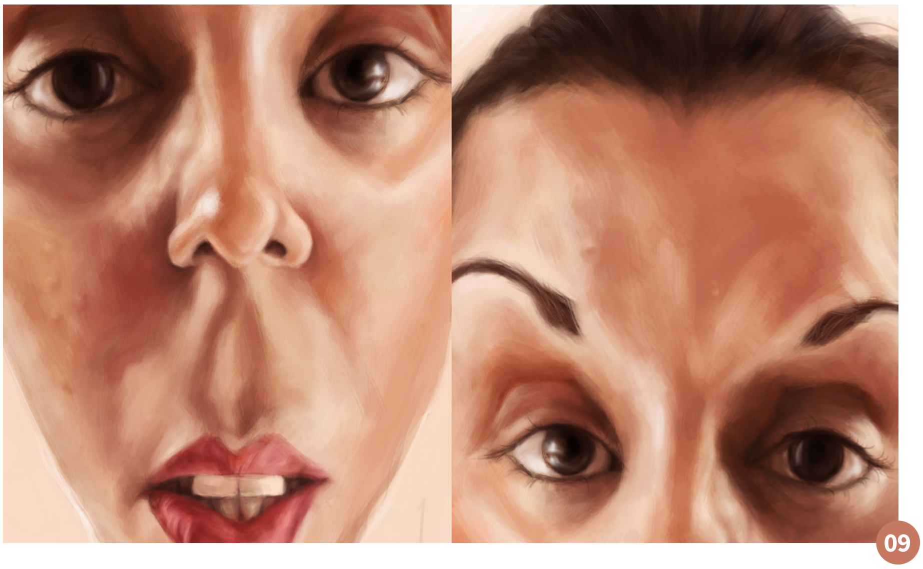
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09 **Details and stronger values:** I then needed to zoom-in and tackle the ingredients that would bring realism to my painting. I first targeted detailing Regina's eyes. For eyes I always use the Soft Round brush, as I've found that this creates the cloudy glassy texture of eyes a lot better than my other chosen brushes. I also use it to paint in pores and spots. It's amazing how one light dot on top of a darker valued dot can create the illusion of a skin pimple.

For hair and eyelashes I created another new layer and used both the hard round and the soft round brushes, with shape dynamics switched on, giving the brushes the shape of a hair follicle. For emphasizing the features, I turned my brush Opacity up to 84% and began to paint bolder values, but only in the areas where I wanted to attract the viewer's focus, in this case being Regina's deep-set eyes, mousy nose, lips and prominent front teeth.

10 **Final touches:** My digital painting is almost complete. What I normally do now is use one of my 'dirty' brushes, which were a free download from a cool Photoshop brush website. I love this brush as it allows me to push the loose traditional feeling of the painting to the next level.

Once selected, I created another new layer, turned off the brush Pen Pressure and just stamped the brush effect in an area of my choice.

How many stamps I do depends on the feeling I'm trying to convey. I then used the eraser tool as Brush #24, and softly erased where the stamp overlapped the subject's main features. Once satisfied with the result, I studied the finished piece both up close and from a distance, signed it, and then saved it as a JPEG. ●

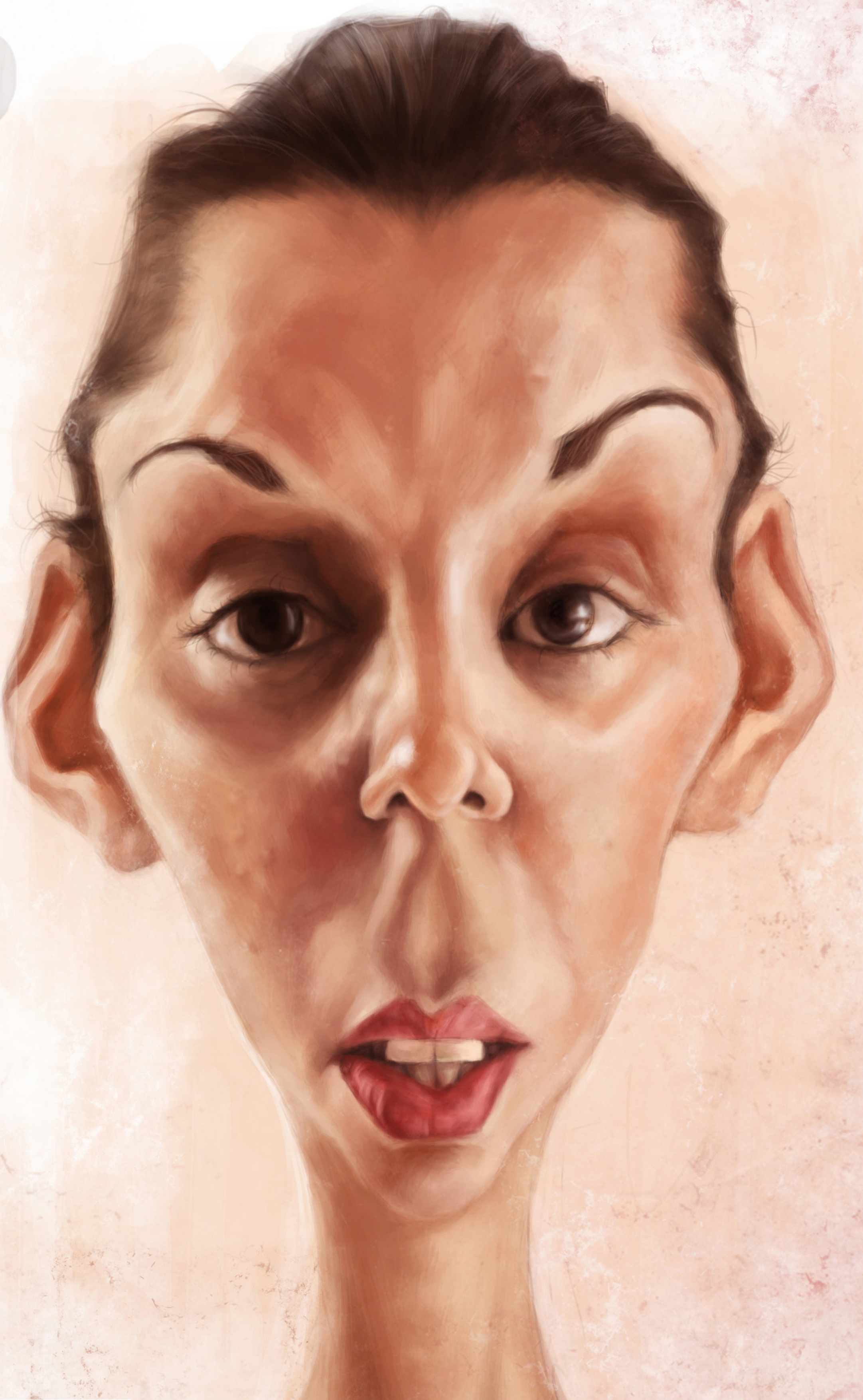
---

07 **Building the painting around warm feminine colors**

08 **Reversing the image to highlight any mistakes helps to improve likeness**

09 **Adding every pimple and pore is impossible – add subtle suggestions**

10 **Adding dirty brushstrokes emphasizes the traditional feeling**



The Artist

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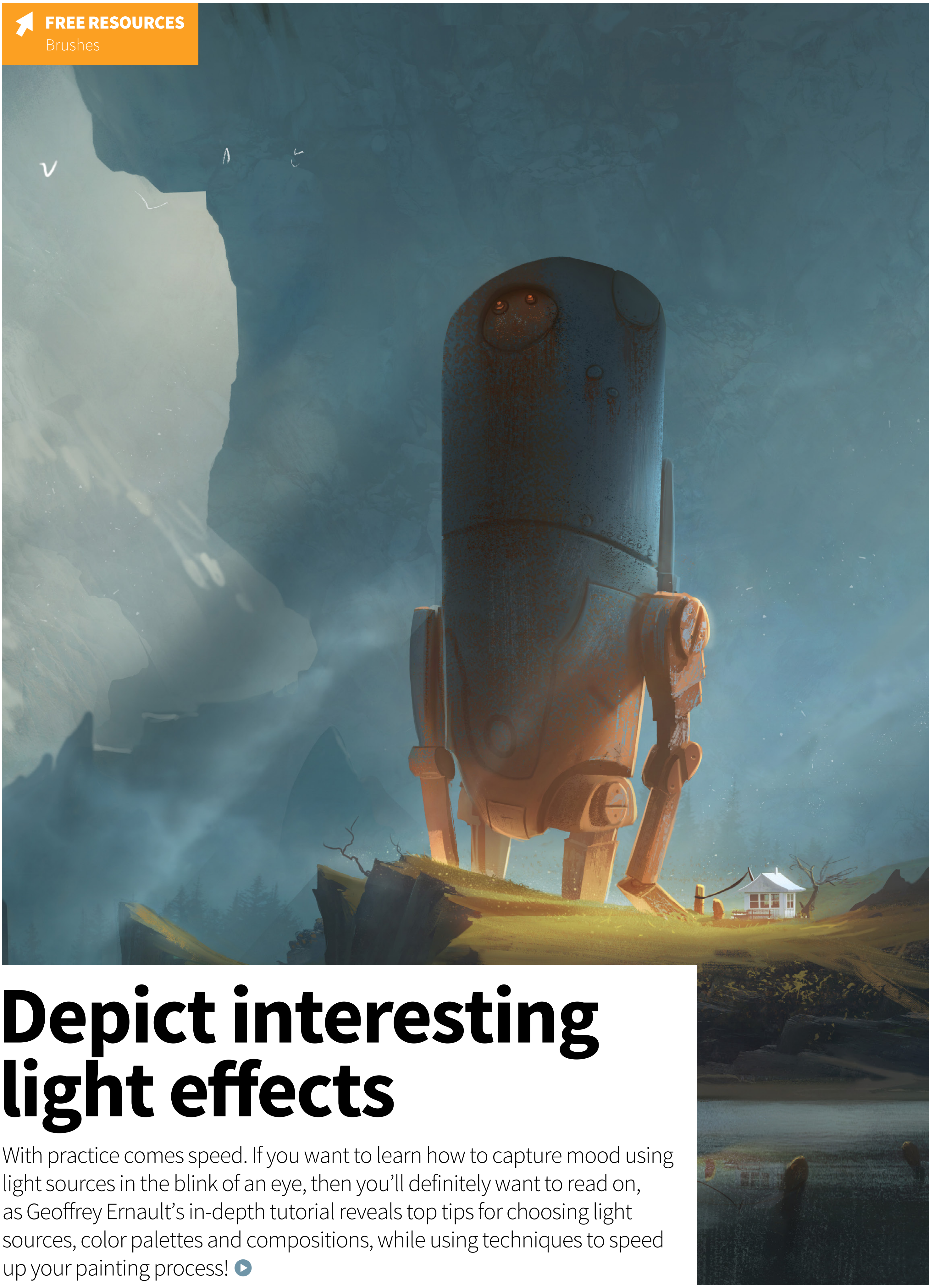
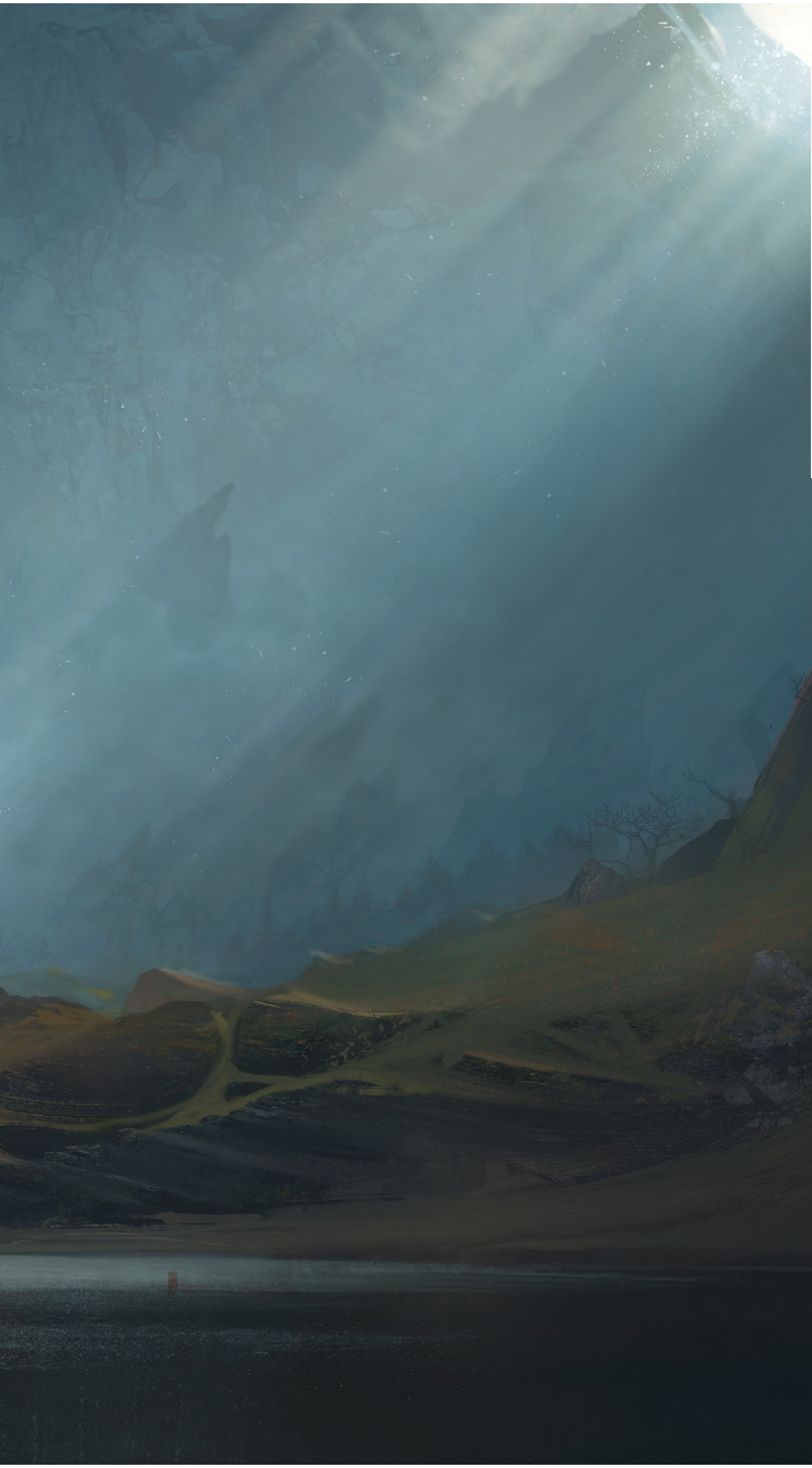


Depict interesting light effects

With practice comes speed. If you want to learn how to capture mood using light sources in the blink of an eye, then you'll definitely want to read on, as Geoffrey Ernault's in-depth tutorial reveals top tips for choosing light sources, color palettes and compositions, while using techniques to speed up your painting process!



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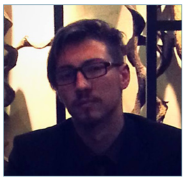


Geoffrey Ernault
geoffreyernault.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Geoffrey Ernault is currently working at Guerilla Games Cambridge as a contractor concept/visualization artist. He has been working as a concept artist for about three years now.

Learn the skills used to establish atmosphere and effective lighting...

Playing with lighting is one of the things I enjoy doing the most. Making the right light choices early on and being able to stick to it during the whole painting process has a drastic effect on your final image. A well-detailed image with poor lighting will just make your image boring and all the time you will have spent on fine details will just end up being useless.

In this tutorial, we will see how to make the right choices (lighting-wise), approach volume rendering, create mood using light sources, and how it affects color. We may as well say a thing or two on composition, shapes and effects too!

The best thing with lighting is that it's usually easy to find and use references for it, and learn it as well. Like a lot of aspects in art, creating a specific lighting from mind can sometimes be quite tricky. But the more you observe the world around you and try to understand how light actually works, the easier it will get.

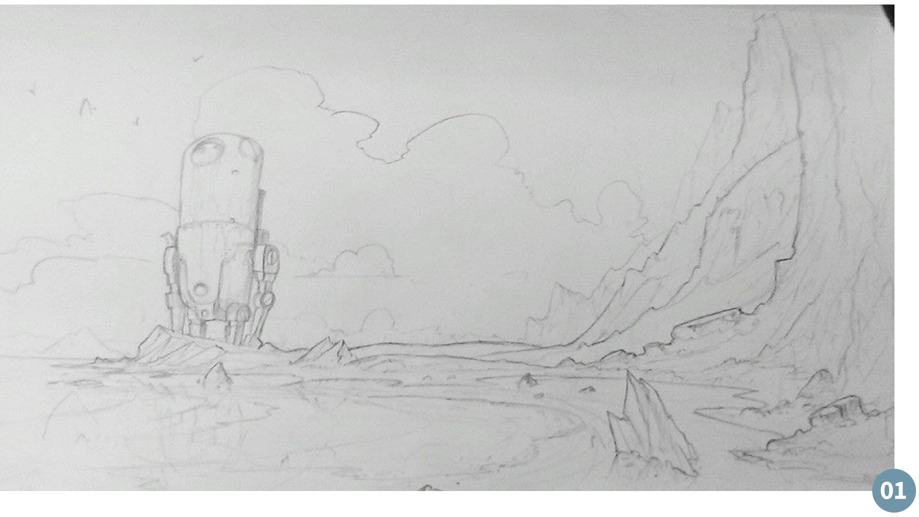
Just open your eyes, and you'll see that you often have occasions to learn more about lighting. Maybe there's a flickering neon above you that creates shadows you can actually notice? A nice table light near your desk? A beam of light being cast through the clouds in the sky?

But for now, let's get to work and have fun! Let there be light…

01 First sketch: Even though most of my final images are digital, I often like to sketch them out first in order to explore ideas. This allows me to be more natural than on a tablet, and not care too much for small details.

I've had this idea in the back of my head of doing one of my favorite robot toys (a Monet Armstrong 0G from TreeA), rusting near a beach. While sketching, I usually focus on composition and shapes, and see if I can already apply an interesting mood and lighting in my mind.

It's good to imagine what your image might be like when it's finished, so you know you can actually go somewhere with it. If that doesn't work, just keep on sketching until you have that little spark and you go "Hey, I can actually see what I could do with that!"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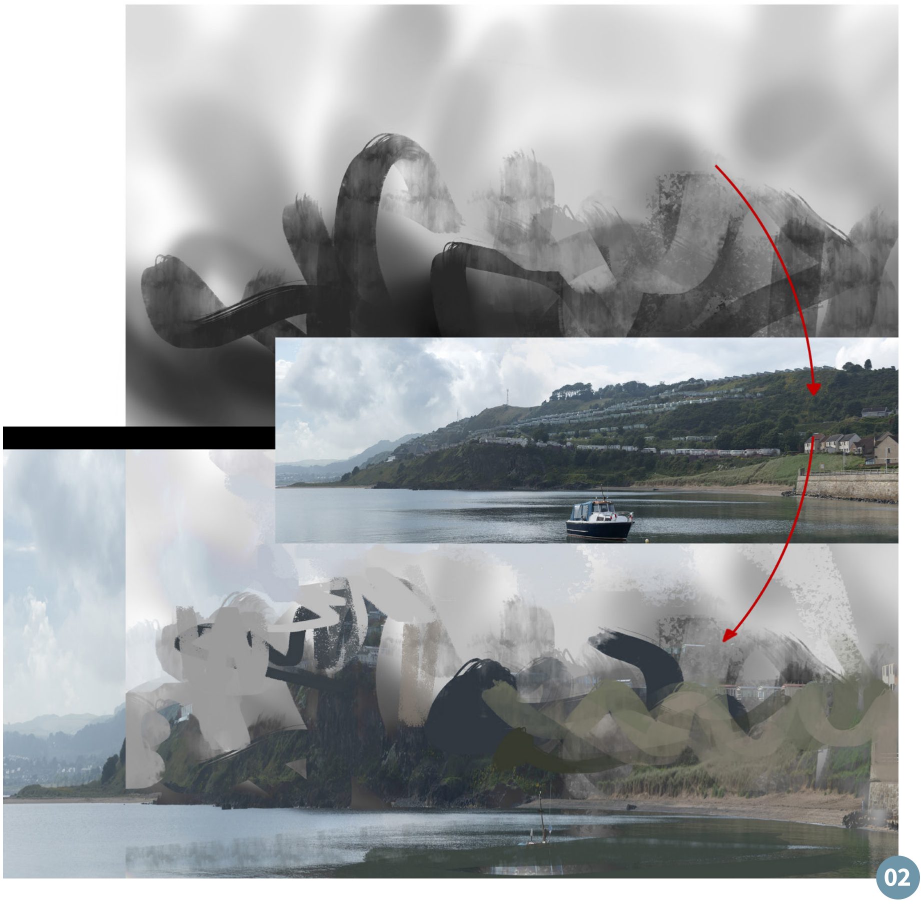
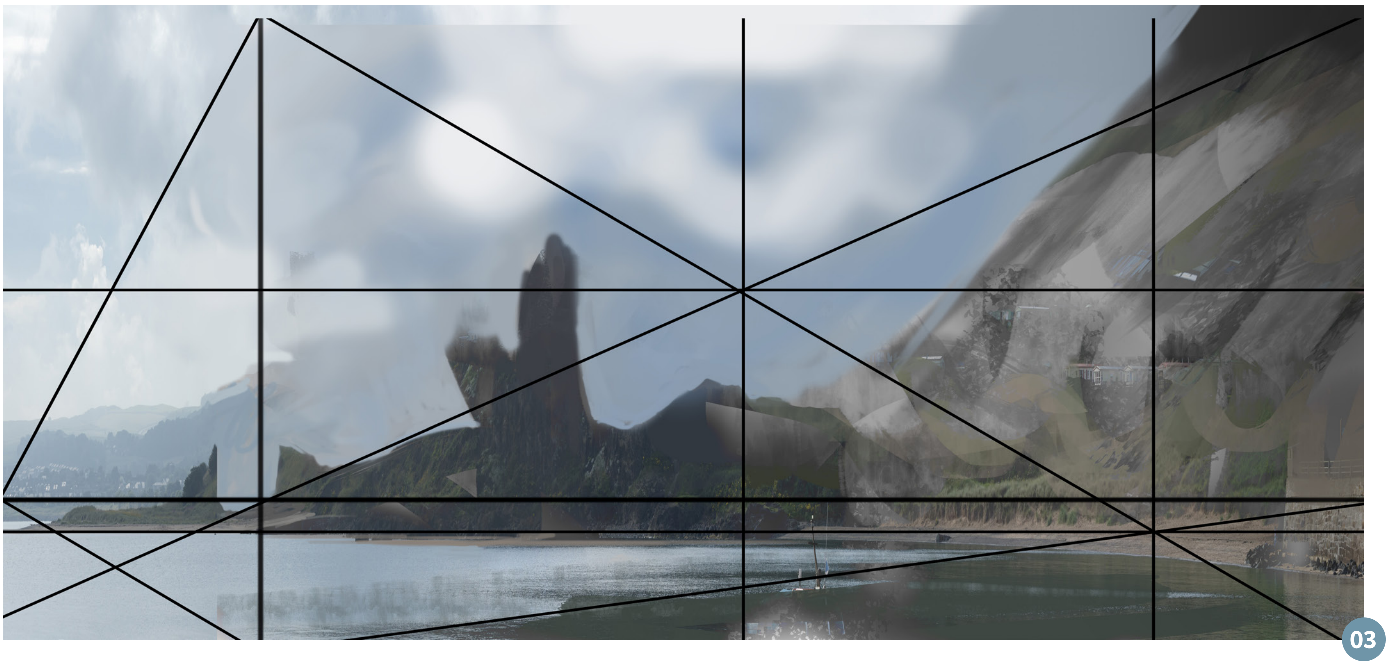

02

02 Generating chaos: Even though I already have my pencil sketch, I like starting off with random chaotic brushstrokes and shapes. This allows me to get new ideas, and actually put some stuff on the canvas, so that I'm not stuck on an empty white canvas. I also force myself to use different brushes to get some textures, and be dynamic with my stylus.

Again, this stage is not meant to get something 'constructed', but more to get ideas and have something to start from. From that, I use a photo (www.cgtextures.com) on top which I usually set on a Soft Light layer, and play around with it until I get ideas and an early color palette.

03 Composition check: At the beginning of an image, I usually place guides that I make depending on what I have in mind. I've recently been experimenting with Loomis' informal subdivision technique.

It's useful to use guides like this at the beginning as they'll help you place important stuff in your image, or simply guide you in placement choices you might hesitate about while placing main shapes. As every rule, it's also good to know how to break it. And sometimes if something feels better than the guides actually recommend, it doesn't really matter, as long as your composition still looks good.



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04 **First color/mood pass:** Before I start to render anything, I like to define my color palette. Even though I've got a picture mixed with random brushstrokes as a base, I can modify that to my liking. The picture is there mostly to get a variety of hues from which I can pick from, while sticking with a palette that works as a whole.

In this image, I simply fill in a layer with blue and set it to Colorburn. I like starting from something dark and then progressively add light to the image, rendering them from every light source like a 3D program. I also add a couple of rock pictures from www.cgtextures.com.

05 **Depth, light and shapes:** Now that I've decided what my main color palette is going to be, I start playing around with shapes during the first painting pass. My composition guidelines from earlier help a lot! I also copy and shrink the whole middle part in order to add a bit more depth. ▶

---

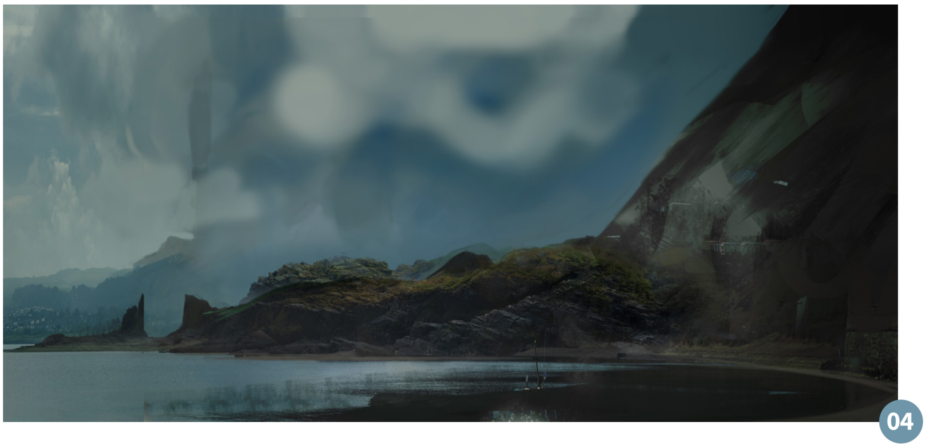
01 **The first pencil sketch**

02 **Generating chaos through random brushstrokes and a picture set on a Soft Light layer**

03 **Using Loomis' informal subdivision technique to create a composition grid**

04 **Going for a cold palette, which will balance with warmer lights to define the points of interest**

05 **Placing the main light sources, adding depth, and starting to paint**



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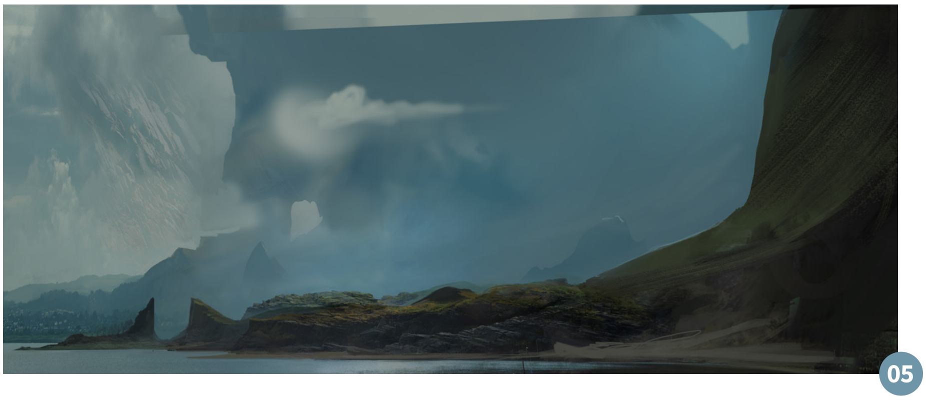
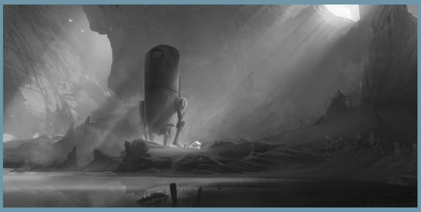


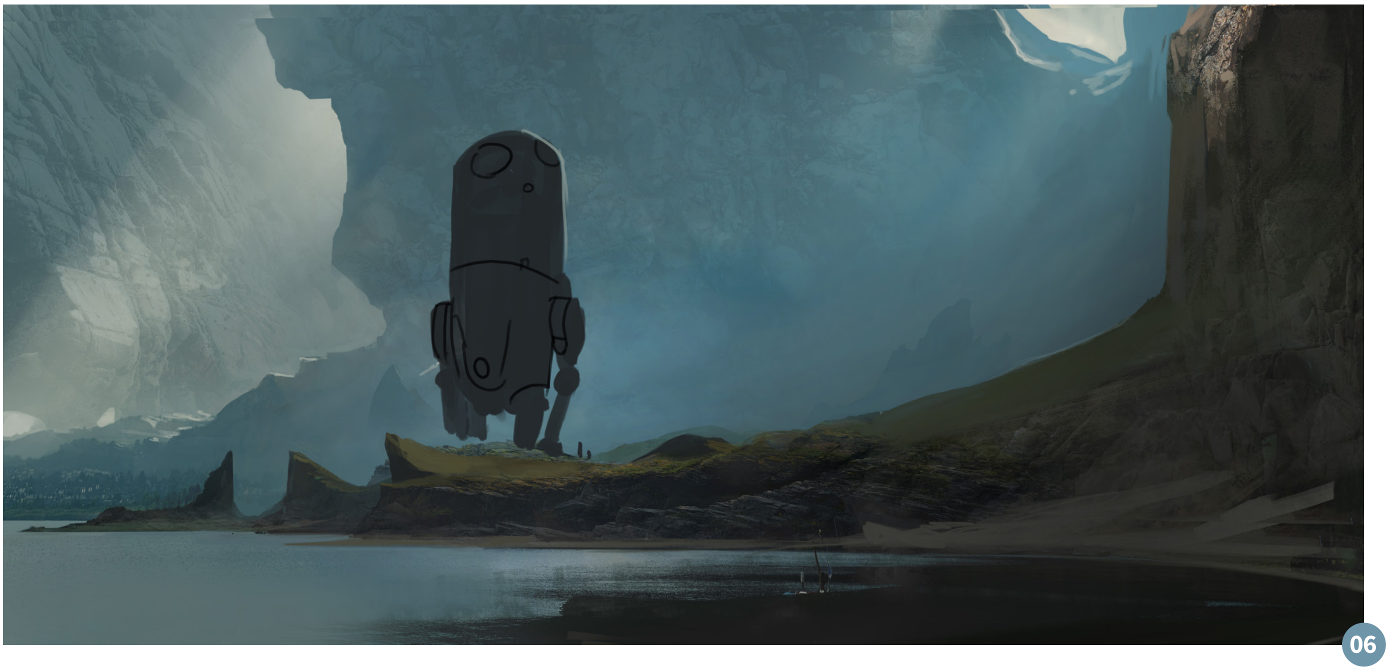
05

PRO TIP

Go grayscale!

I often like to keep a grayscale version of my image on top, to check for values. For that, I use a color adjustment layer and set the saturation slider all the way to the left. This helps to be sure that your values are correct, even without color (notice the contrast around the house).





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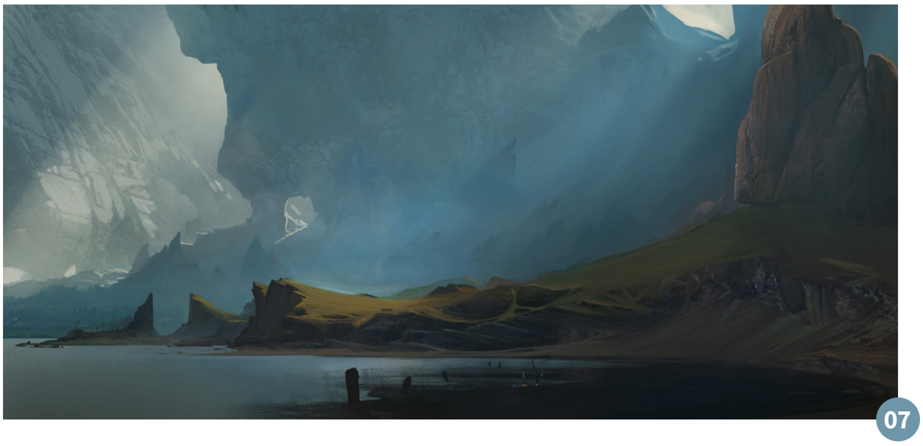

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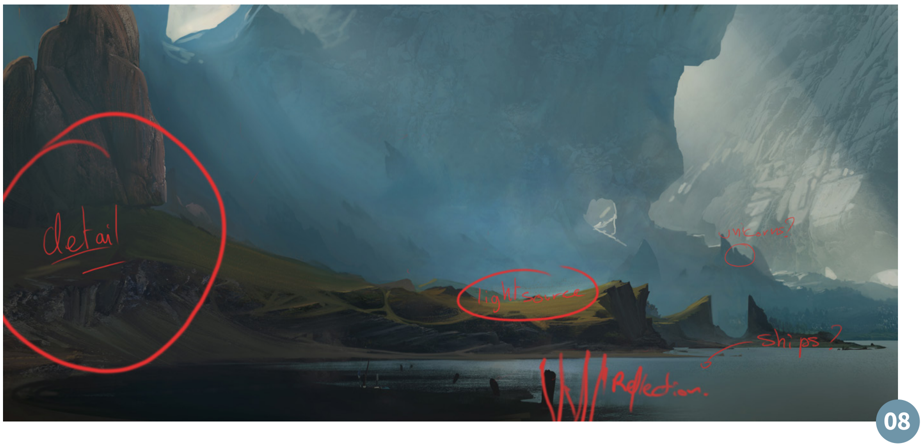


08

I place my main light source (a directional light coming from the top-right of the image). I want the lights to feel cavernous, so I make sure to have a big rock in front of the light in the back. I also use the Mixer brush with a Rake brush in order to get a more painterly aspect overall. The light source will help focus the attention on my main focal point later on (which will be in the center of the image).

06 Silhouette, textures and light beam: At this stage, I start dropping in my main character and making sure he works in the image. I play with the silhouette until it's where it belongs in space. I also place some placeholder beams to get an idea of where my light is going, what it hits, and where I'll have shadows. It's important to think of the main areas you want to have in light, and focus on that.

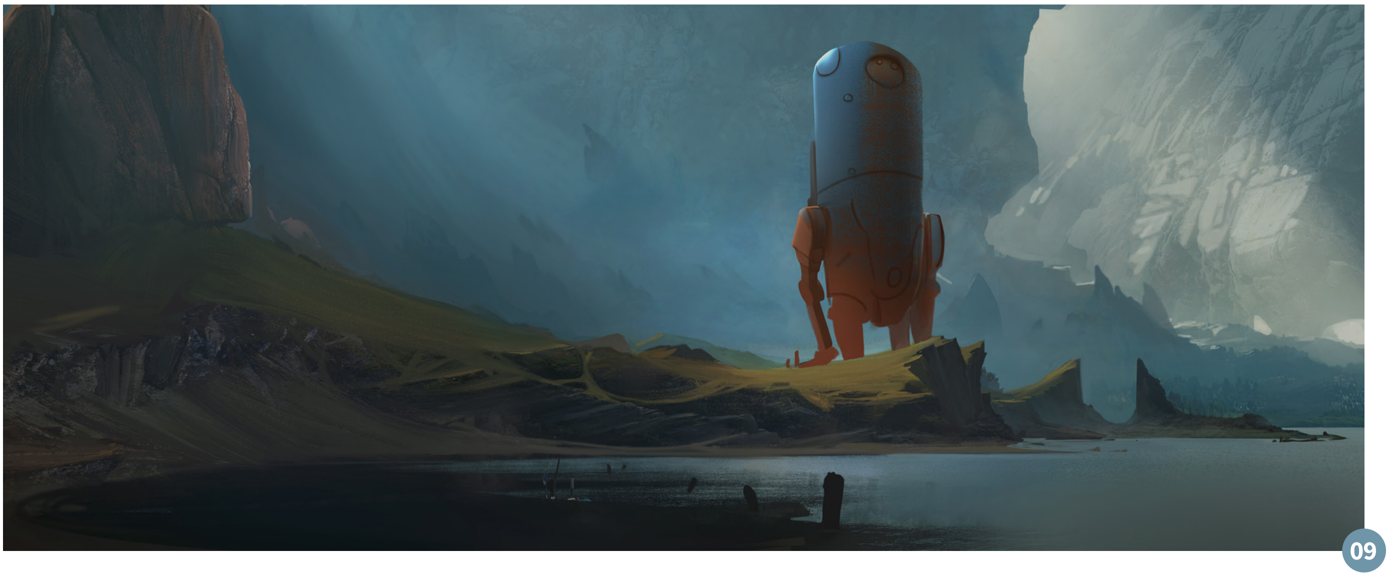
I've also dropped a couple more rock textures from cgtextures. Notice the main shape/ light change in the background, in order to make the environment more cavernous.

07 Saturation, more interesting shapes and focal: I start working on each area and add shapes for extra interest (circular areas in the grass, pointy areas in the center mountain, and more angular/ broken shapes on the right mountain). Opening the top-right corner also allows the image to breathe more and add more light beams.

I mostly paint using the Mixer brush with a Rake brush, or a soft blurry one, which I use with a small radius (otherwise it blurs the image). The rock on the right was taking too much attention in the image, so I make the colors colder and put a pass of low opacity blue on top to put it more in the background. I also boost the overall saturation a bit more.

08 Horizontal flip, making lists: It's easy to lose yourself in an image and forget about stuff. I often take breaks, stand further from the image and see what I still need to work on. I simply keep a layer on top of the image with notes of what I still need to do, what I could do, and basically any ideas that come to mind. I also flip the image often (as you can see here) so that my eye is 'refreshed' and sees mistakes more easily. Painting for too long in the same image orientation will sometimes cause your eye to become 'error-proof'.

09 First character pass: Once I start to know what my general environment will look like and have the lighting in mind, I start sketching out the main focal points and rendering



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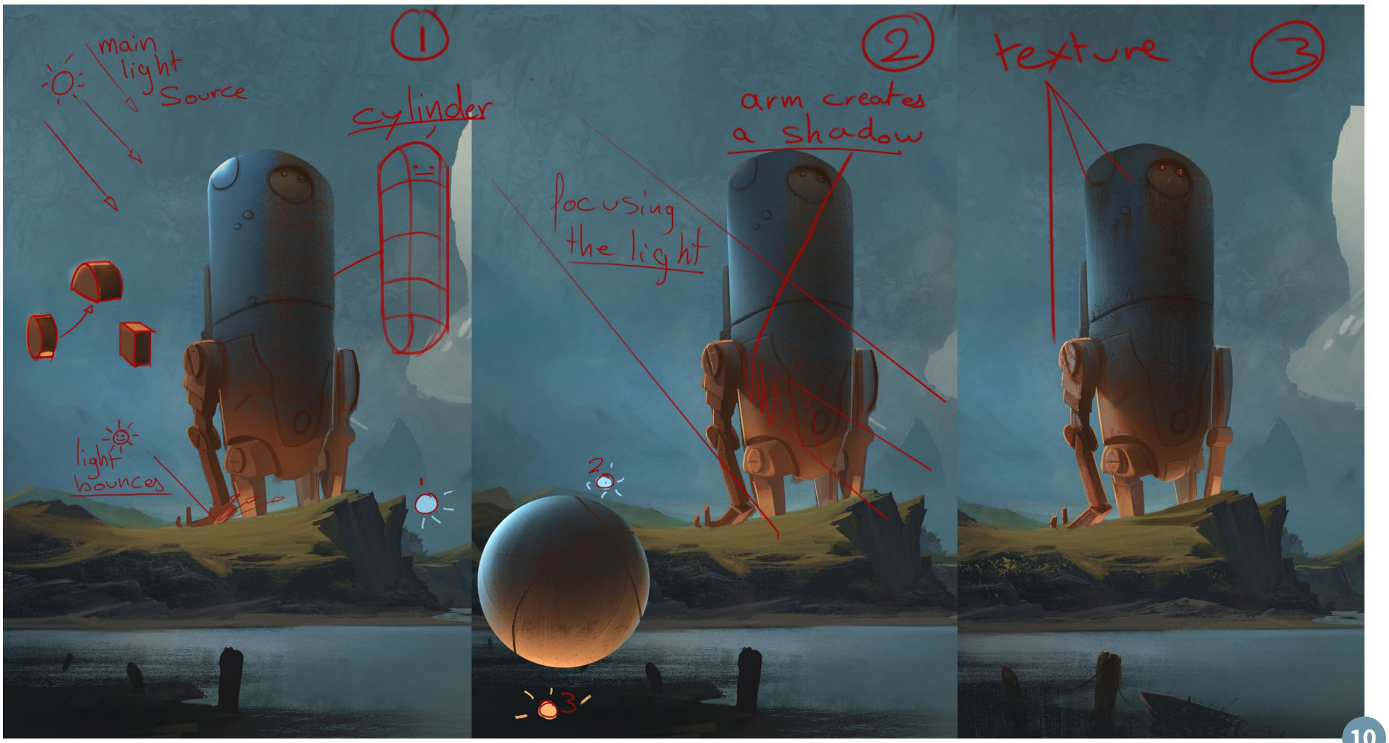

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them. The first thing I do on this character is add an orange/blue gradient. I knew I wanted him to be rusting, so adding a warm color helps adding color contrast to the focal point (the character's legs in this case).

I start with rendering every main volume in a very simple way .The whole torso is a cylinder, which I basically start adding volume on with a simple gradient from left to right (my light source being on the left on this image). Try treating everything as simple shapes. At this stage I use the Dodge tool mostly, and a soft brush.

10 Light rendering: I then add a gradient from the bottom, reflecting the light rays bouncing on the grass and becoming a secondary light source.

1. Shows the main light source, the different shapes used, and the secondary source.

2. Shows the lighting focusing more on the bottom of the character, allowing for stronger light/shadow impact near his arm. It also leaves the top of the character in the shadows a bit more.

3. Shows the same lighting but with added textures and finer details. The texture is a simple Rake brush used with the Mixer brush tool. At the bottom of the second image, you'll also notice a material sphere which I sometimes create to get an idea of how light will play with the main object and textures. These are useful as reference during the rendering stage. ▶

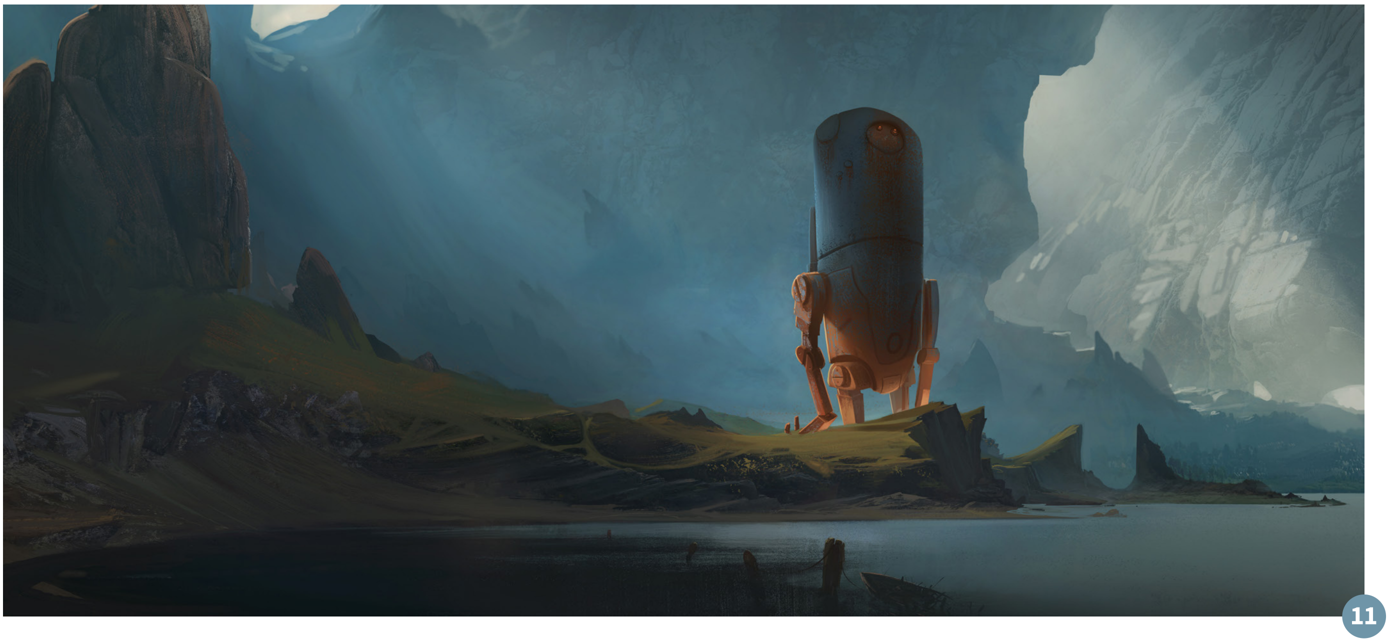
06 Placing the character, adding rock textures and light beams for interest

07 First general render pass, letting the image breath more, and making the shapes more interesting

08 Keeping a layer with notes helps to remind you what tasks are left to do. Flipping the image also helps

09 Starting to render the main volumes of the character, and trying to think in 3D

10 Simplifying shapes, and using a material sphere for reference is very useful to create light



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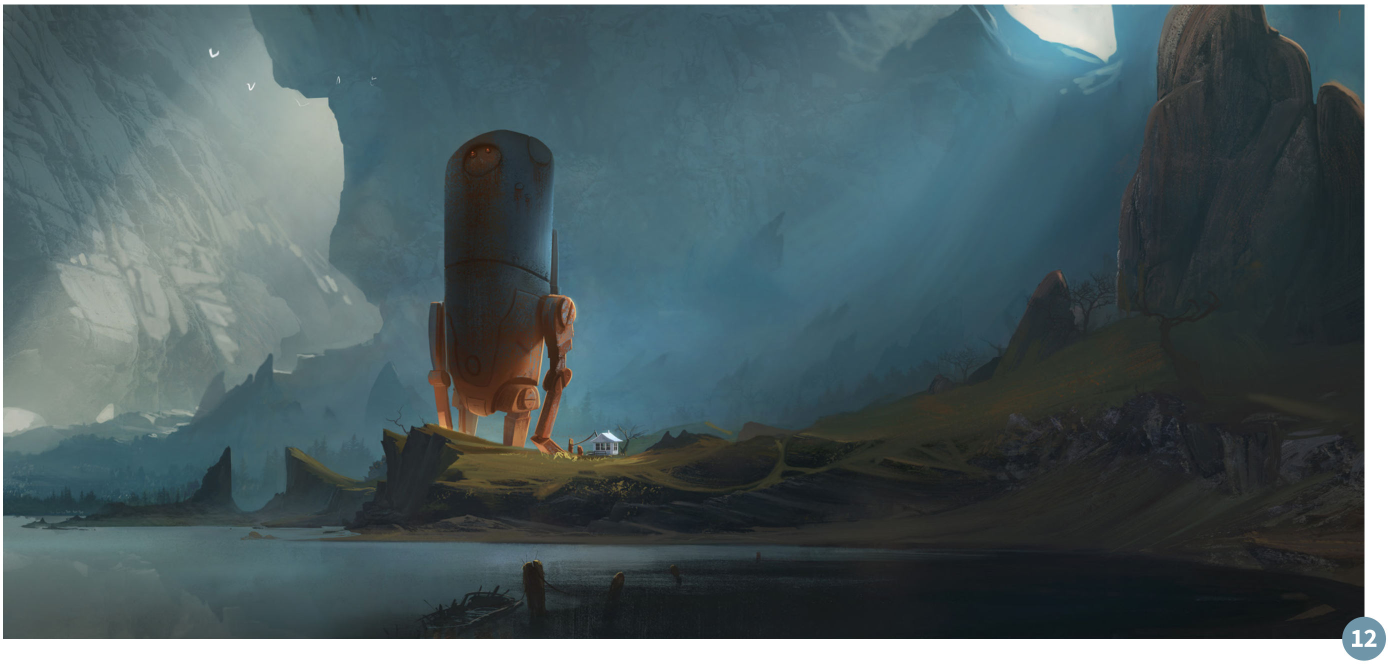

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11 **Overall small render pass:** At this stage, I get back to my overall image and check for things that shock me. The rock feels too lonely, so I add a bit more detail that leads towards the character. I also add a boat in the bottom of the image in order to add scale and life to the image a bit more. A bit more detail has been put into the character too (glowing eyes, thinner arm, and so on).

12 **Scale, storytelling and birds:** I often like to play on very simple details that tell stories. The idea behind this one was this big robot rusting in a massive cave, which someone discovered and then tried to repair. I thought it'd be funny to have the robot tied to a very small rope, attached to the house (obviously, the rope wouldn't help if he tried to get away). The birds also add some story, as the robot maybe dreams of being able to fly away from the cave but it is still broken. So poetic!

It also helps to give scale to the whole image. Adding trees also helps with that, since we know what a tree size usually is and can then compare the robot to them.

13 **Reflection:** A simple trick for achieving a reflection is to simply duplicate what you want mirrored, and add that on a Lighten layer on the desired surface. That will only leave the highlighted areas where you want them, and keep the base value of the material you're applying that to. Keep in mind that you can adapt that reflection by playing with curves and levels.

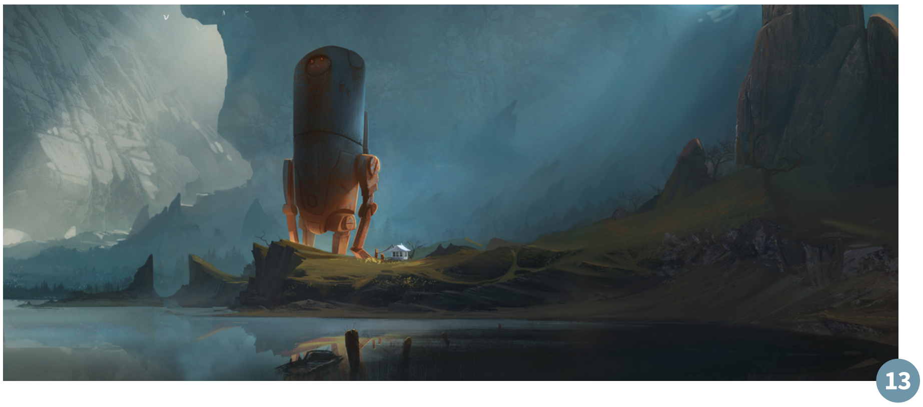
14 **Let there be light:** The best part! This is where everything pops. At this stage, I create a couple of Color Dodge/Screen/Linear layers and add beams on them with a soft brush. The trick here is to not use color and values that are too bright, as they'll burn your image. Go for something subtle rather than something too powerful if you're not sure, and go progressively.

You may also notice some fog in the background, which is simply added on a screen layer with a Cloud brush. Again, don't make it too obvious and go for something subtle.

You will get much better results if you take into account what actually obstructs light and creates projected beams of shadow. You can see an example of this near the rock on the right and towards the robot's head.

15 Let there be dust: Finally, I add a couple of cool effects in the light beams to make them more consistent. I want the atmosphere to feel humid/dusty, so I just make a selection of a couple of beams around the shoulders and use a Cloud brush instead of a simple soft one.

I also use a Cloud brush with the Eraser tool to carve more details into it. Again, this is on a Screen (or Color Dodge) layer. I also flatten the whole image, and play a bit with the Dodge and Burn tool in order to add a tiny bit more contrast to some areas. ●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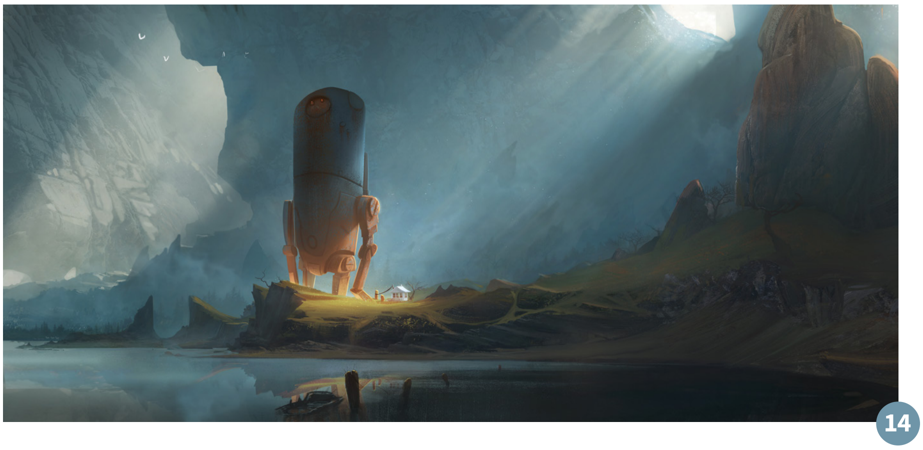
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11 Adding a few more rocks so the main rock doesn't take the viewer's attention too much

12 Adding the house and the rope tied to the robot to add storytelling, as well as trees for scale reference

13 Using a duplicated flipped image of the robot on a lighten layer creates a quick and efficient reflection in the water

14 Playing with light beams to add mood and show the light source

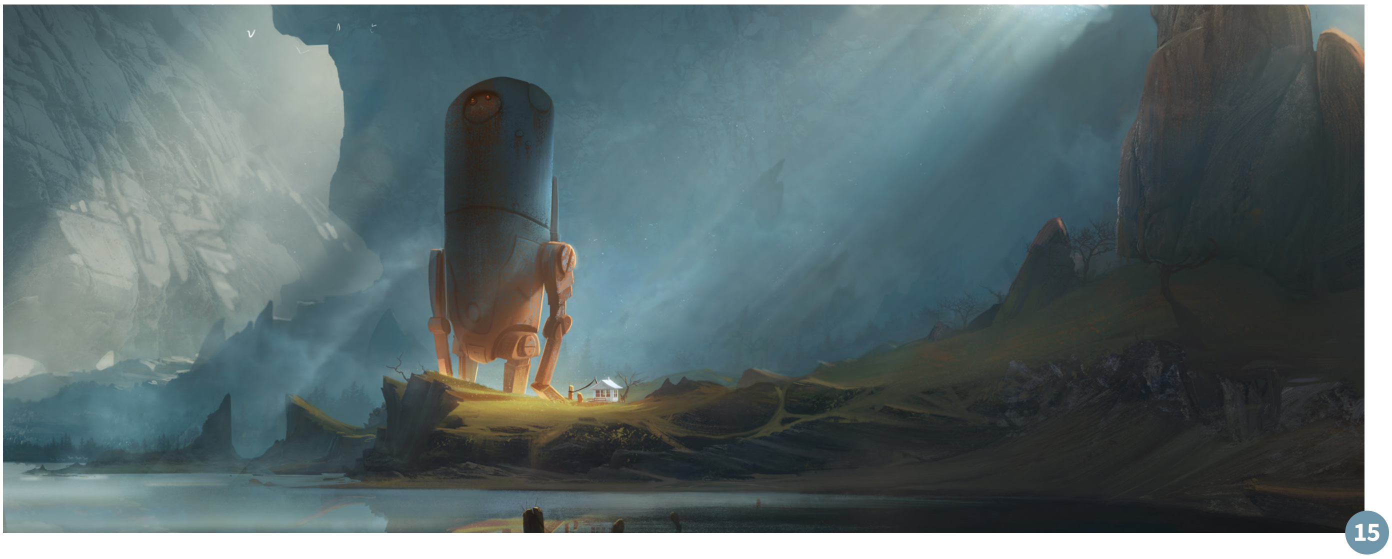
15 Placing a couple of dust clouds in the light beams helps to sell the mood

PRO TIP

Use real life reference

It's very useful to have different light sources on your desk that you can play around with for reference. For this image, I had the robot near me most of the time, and tried to see how light affected it by using a monitor light.

Observe stuff around you whenever you have time. In the metro, in the street, while waiting for your game to load, in the toilets, while taking the plane, while you're bored during work or something. Light is always different. Sources vary, daytime changes, materials change and settings always differ. It's great to understand how all this works together.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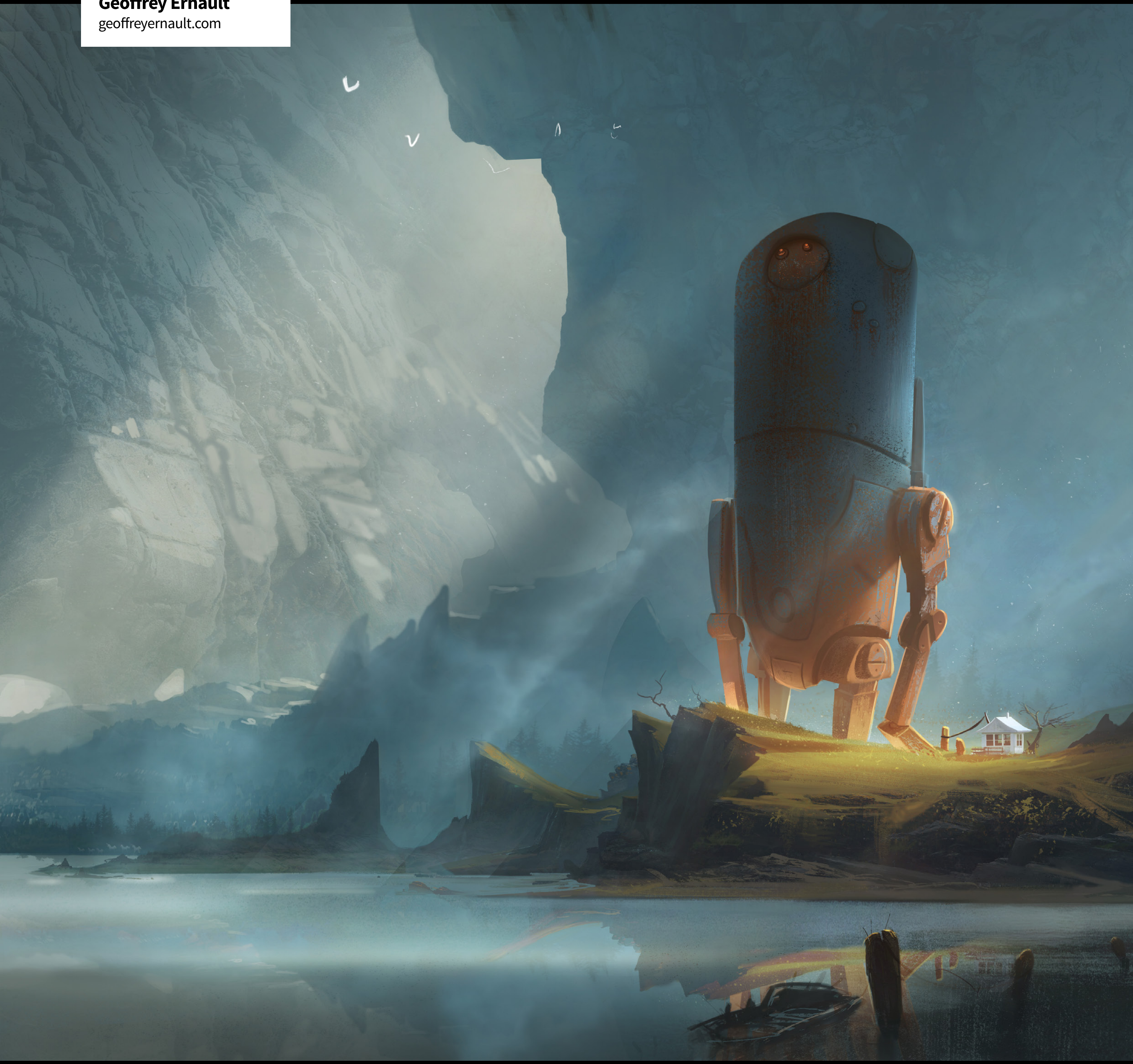
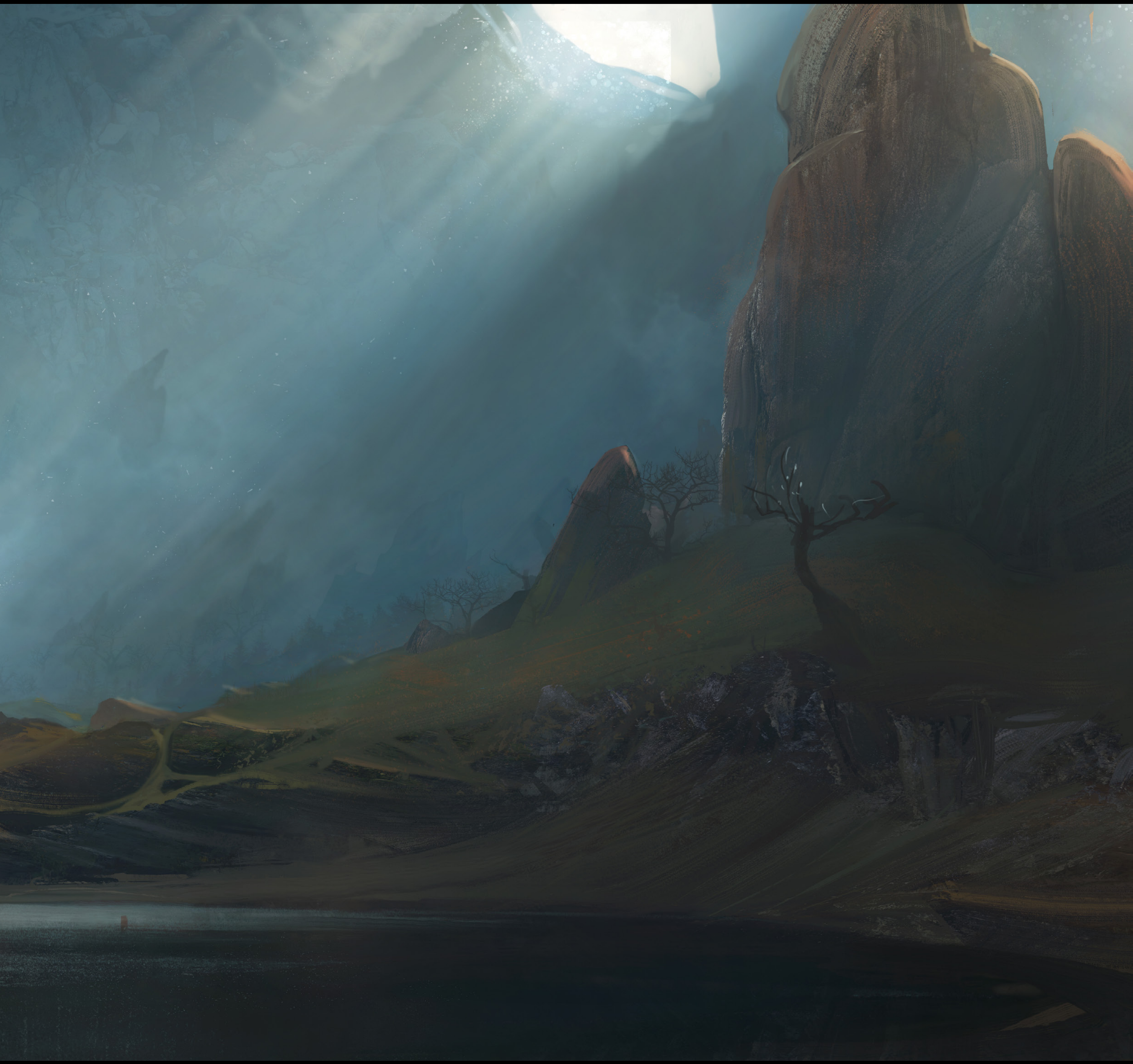
The Artist

Geoffrey Ernault

geoffreyernault.com





2dartist

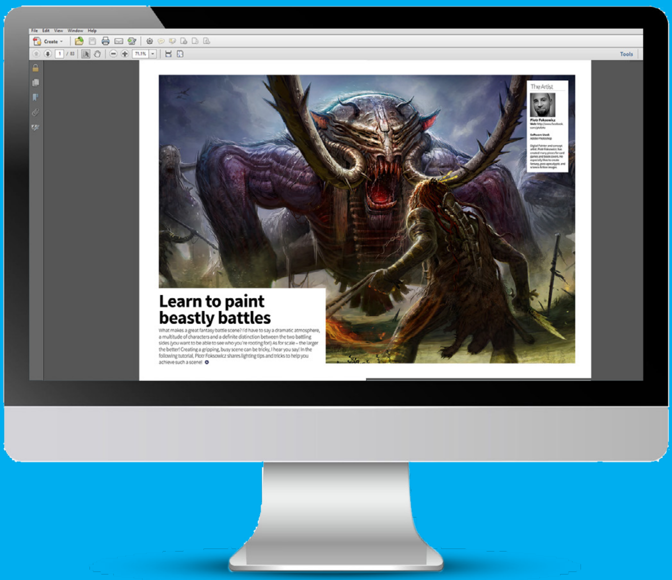
101 issues of 2D awesomeness

We look back over the last 101 issues to check out some of our achievements…

2dartist is *the* magazine for CG and digital artists around the globe, whether you already work in 2D or are just getting started.

Each issue is packed with techniques, tutorials, interviews, articles, project overviews and galleries, providing you with the perfect platform from which to improve your 2D skills, learn from the pros and get inspired for your next projects.

Here, we've compiled a collection of cool facts about 2dartist to celebrate issue 101. Enjoy!



Learn to paint beastly battles

What makes a great fantasy battle scene? I'd have to say a dramatic atmosphere, a multitude of characters and a definite distinction between the two battling sides (you want to be able to see who you're rooting for!) As for scale – the larger the better! Creating a gripping, busy scene can be tricky, I hear you say! In the following tutorial, Piotr Foksowicz shares lighting tips and tricks to help you achieve such a scene!

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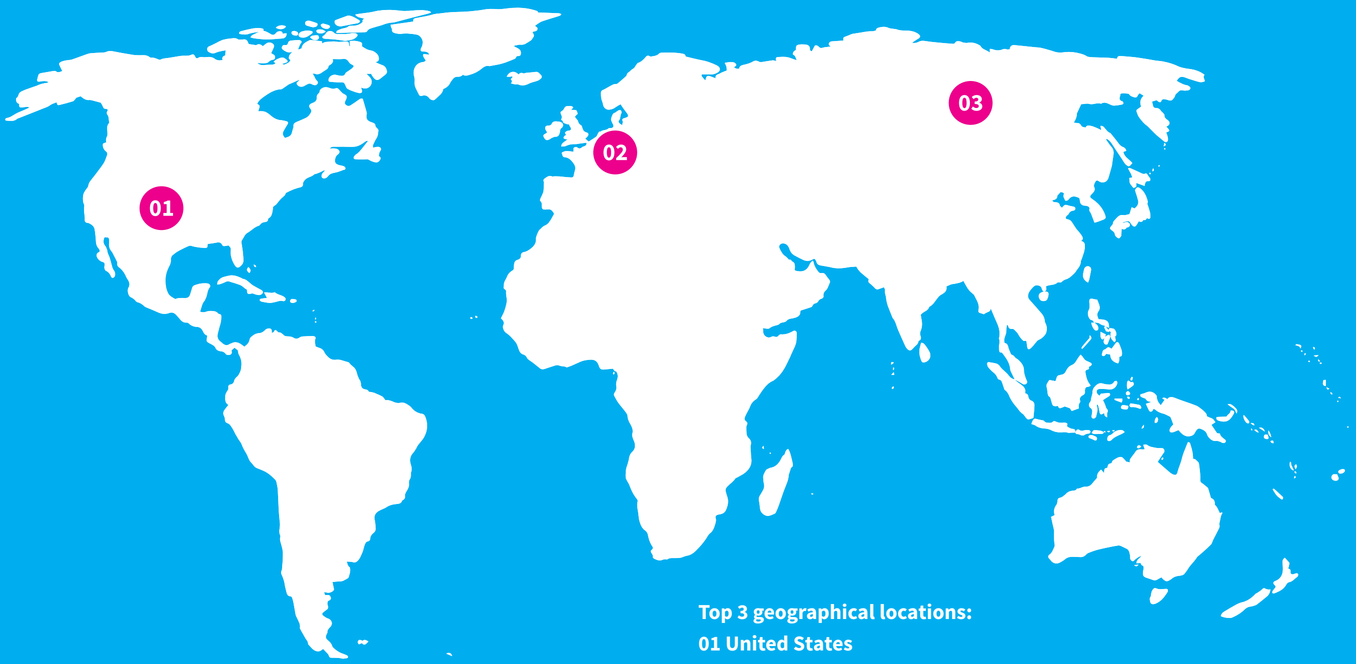

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> ***Ken Schaefer, Lake in the Hills, Illinois***

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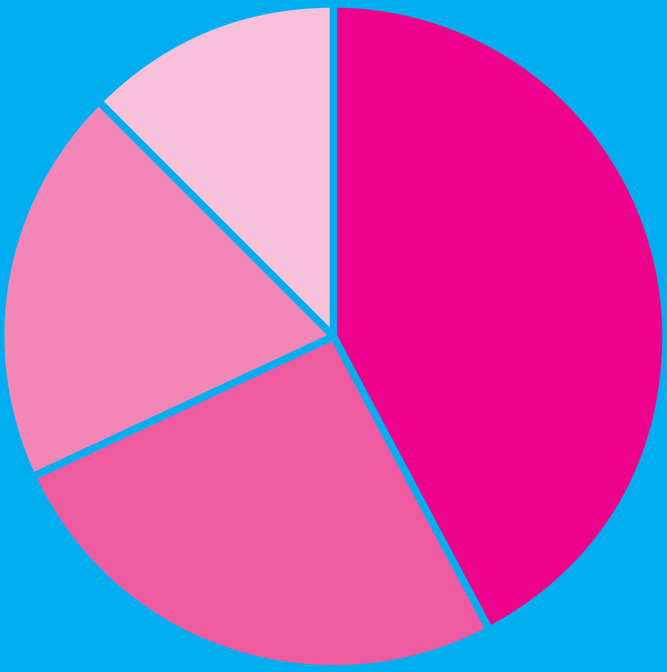
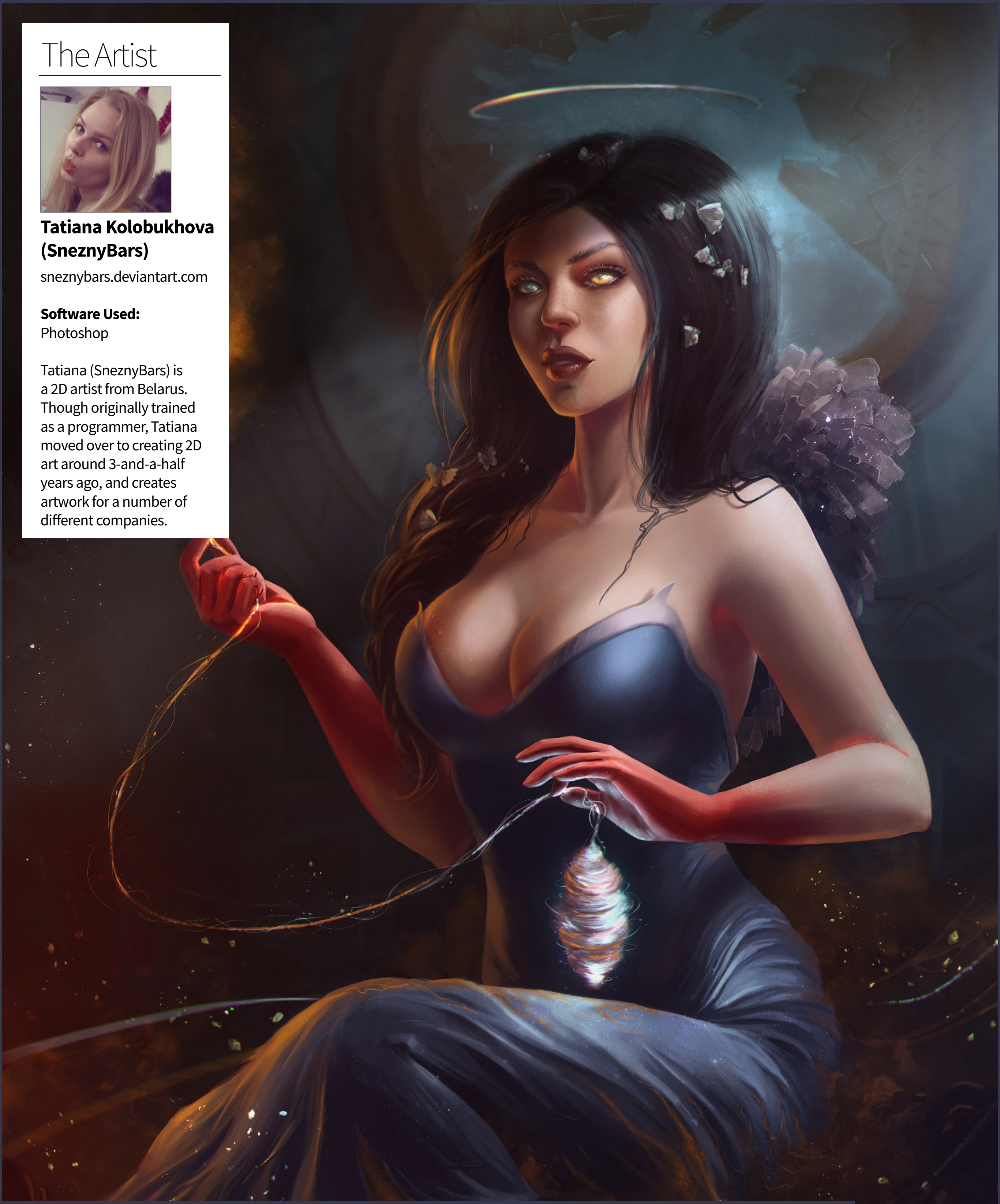




The Artist

Tatiana Kolobukhova (SneznyBars)
sneznybars.deviantart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Tatiana (SneznyBars) is a 2D artist from Belarus. Though originally trained as a programmer, Tatiana moved over to creating 2D art around 3-and-a-half years ago, and creates artwork for a number of different companies.

Create a dynamic character

Tatianna Kolobukhova (SneznyBars) takes us through her painting process for her image *Mokosh*. She shares tips and tricks on creating dynamic poses, and turning line-art into a rendered illustration ▶

Learn how to paint a vibrant goddess using helpful techniques in Photoshop...

In this tutorial, I'm going to talk about my latest artwork *Mokosh*. Mokosh is a Slavic goddess, protector of women's work and destiny. I wanted to draw a beautiful woman, so the first time I sketched her she looked like a queen, but she became more magical during the painting process. I emphasized the details on her hands and spindle.

01 **A quick line-sketch:** To create a good working atmosphere I listen to music or watch a film (yes, it doesn't hinder).

To start this project, I drew a line drawing that helped me to think about the character and her story. I added a lot of detail, but was able to change, delete or add new elements throughout the process.

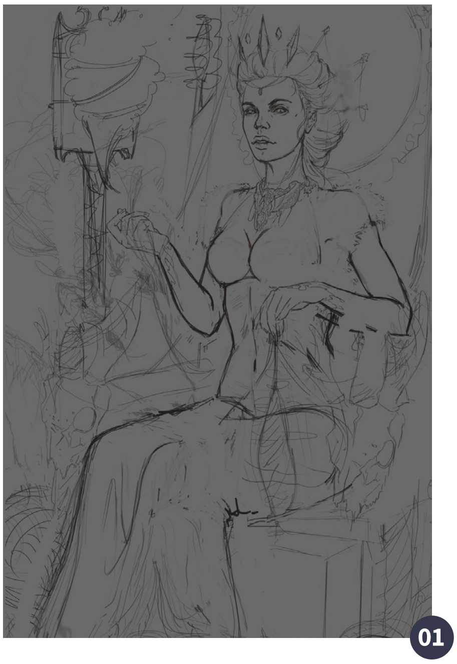
This was the same for the background – I initially wanted to draw a big throne, but as she was a fantasy character, she should have a more fantasy-based location. I found that lots of fibers was good for that.

02 **The variations of color:** I don't draw black and white sketches – I tried, but it's not convenient for me. So I drew two or three variations on the color palette. Sometimes I draw the desired color first time, but sometimes I can do a lot of edits until I'm satisfied with the result.

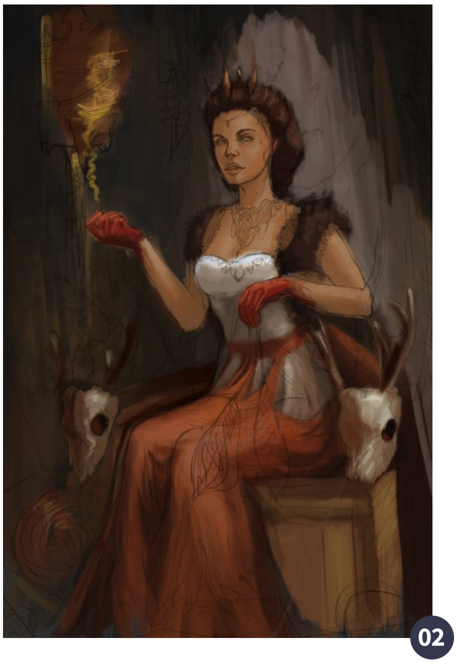
Here, the first color was more classic and her clothes looked Slavic. I tried a few quick options, but opted for a dark-blue dress. This helped to highlight the arms and spindle better.

03 **Work with color:** When I had chosen the color I wanted, I started to choose the lighting source. I drew different items of clothing and her hair, and changed the background. Initially, she had been sat on a throne, then on a chair and in the end I left her shrouded with yarn.

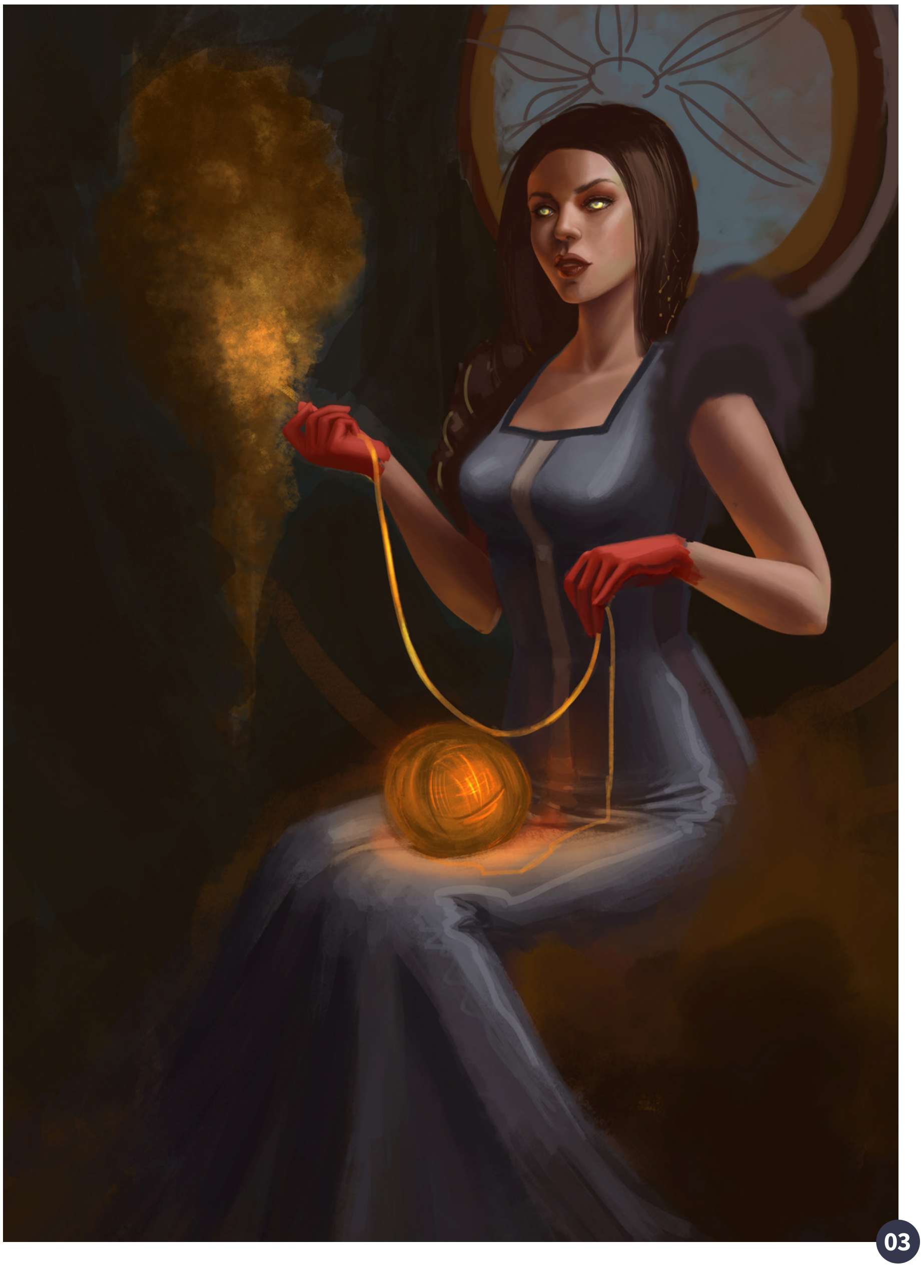
I tried to choose colors that harmonized well with each other and showed each other's strengths. The glowing red on her hands clearly stands out over the darker blue. ▶



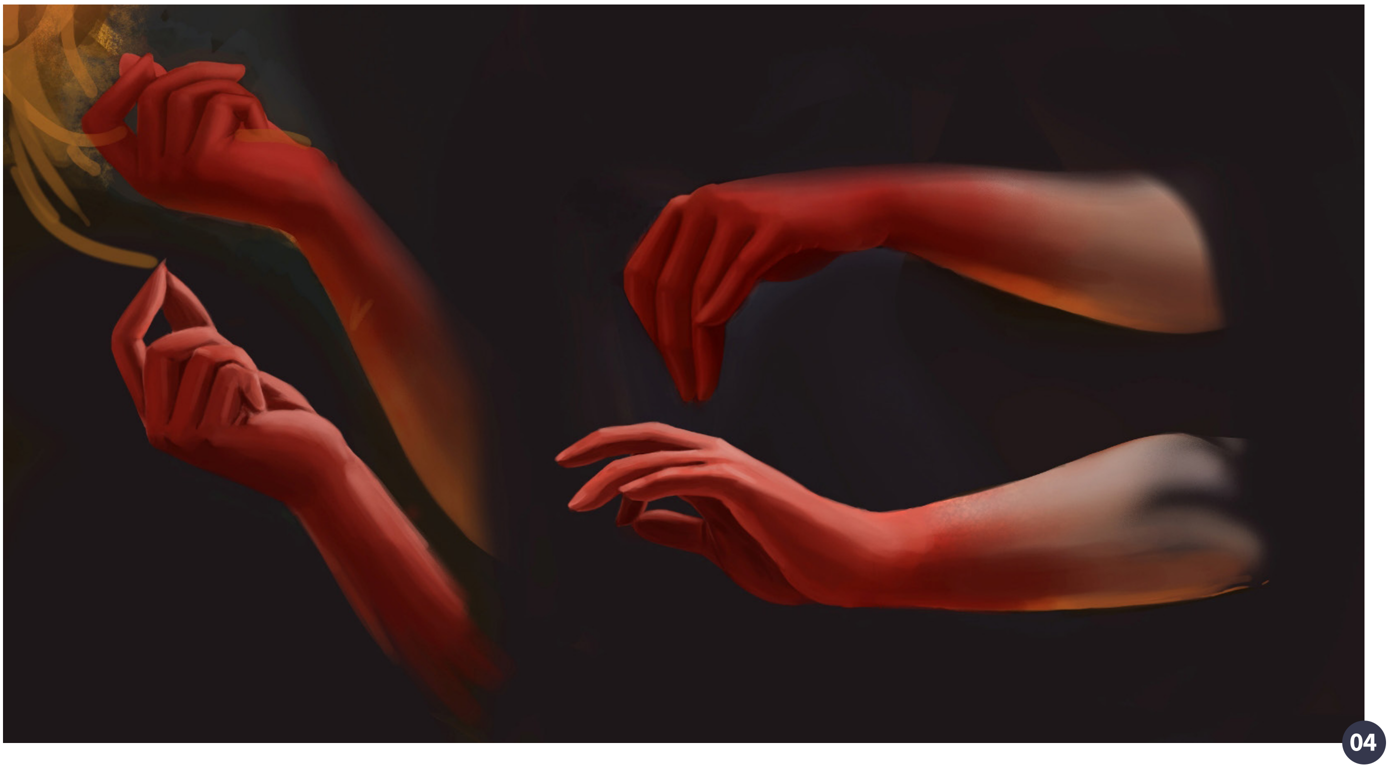
01 **Drawing detail is good because you can create a new story or idea for your piece**



02 **Do not be afraid to try different options until you are satisfied with the result**



03 **The different color and object choices**



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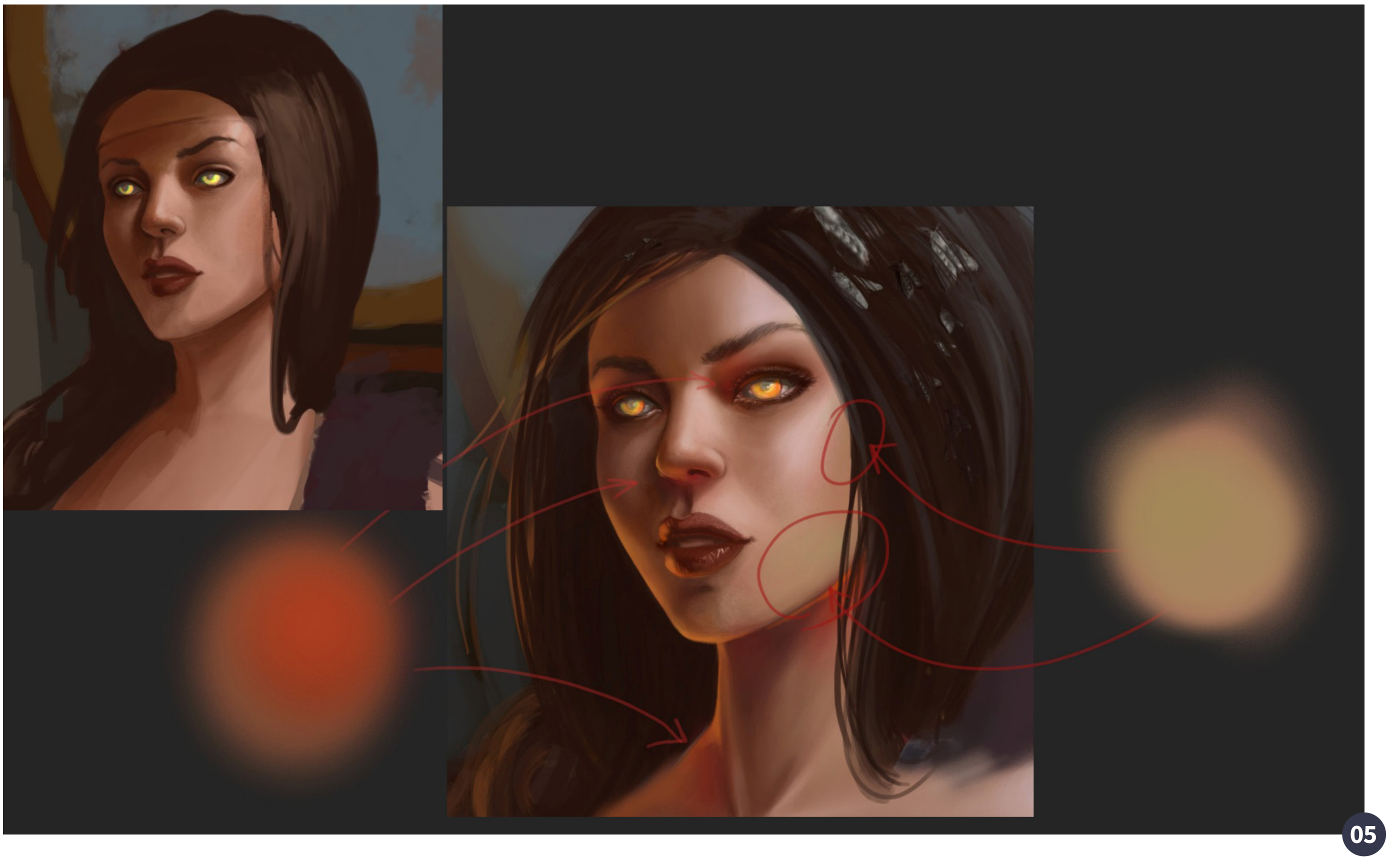


05

The tangle or spindle must also be recognized as they're important subjects as well. To highlight her head, I added a circle behind the woman.

I usually create many layers, but I try not to make too many because my computer will begin to slow down.

04 Dynamic pose: We are often confronted with the fact that the characters are not dynamic. To avoid this, you can use techniques such as flying hair, floating cloth, particles blurred in motion. In addition, it is important to pose the character in such a way that he or she does not look like they have muscle problems! Try to position yourself in a similar pose to your character. If you feel uncomfortable and it's difficult to do, this is probably something you should change.

Here, I redrew the hands, making them more elegant. Also, on the first scene the woman looked hunched, so I corrected the position of her back, arms and legs. With the Liquify tool (Filter > Liquify or Shift+Ctrl+X), you can bend, stretch or narrow the desired part. This is a helper tool; do not use it too much, because the figure can lose its natural state.

05 **Color of the skin:** When I draw a face, I pay attention to the skin. You'll notice that it is not one smooth color – there are a range of yellow, green and even purple shades. In this particular case, I highlighted the skin using a hot orange tint in the nose, eyes, neck, armpits and the folds of her elbows. This gave the picture a brighter and more interesting color. On the temples and cheeks I also added a little bit of green. I usually do this with a translucent brush for controlling color saturation.

Because the source of light was cold on her shoulder, chest and forehead, I added a delicate shade of blue. A second light source was warm so the light and reflection from the side was hotter.

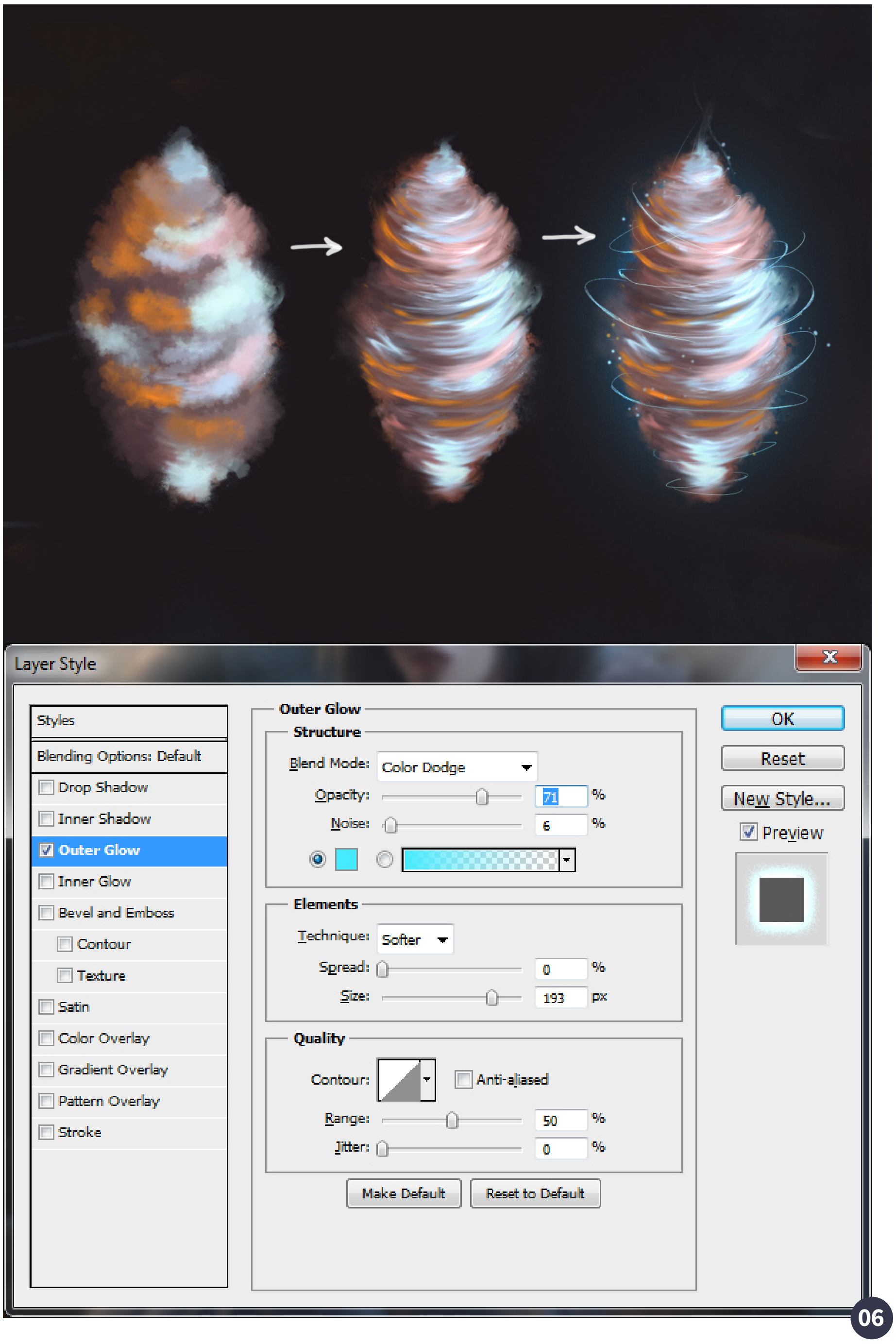
You can find great examples of skin tone in realistic paintings.

06 **Spindle and yarn:** The spindle was one of the most important parts of the picture. I wanted to draw a glowing tangle on her knees with the same color as the yarn. However, for a more interesting color scheme, I decided to split the thread color on the spindle.

I used a Standard brush to create shapes and shades and then made threads on the spindle with the Smudge tool and added sparks. I made the blue glow around the spindle with the Outer Glow layer settings.

07 **Background:** For me, it isn't easy to draw a background. I find that there is no need to create a fictional background if the emphasis of the piece is on a character. In this scene, I got rid of the throne and hanging draperies. Instead, I sat the woman on the yarn.

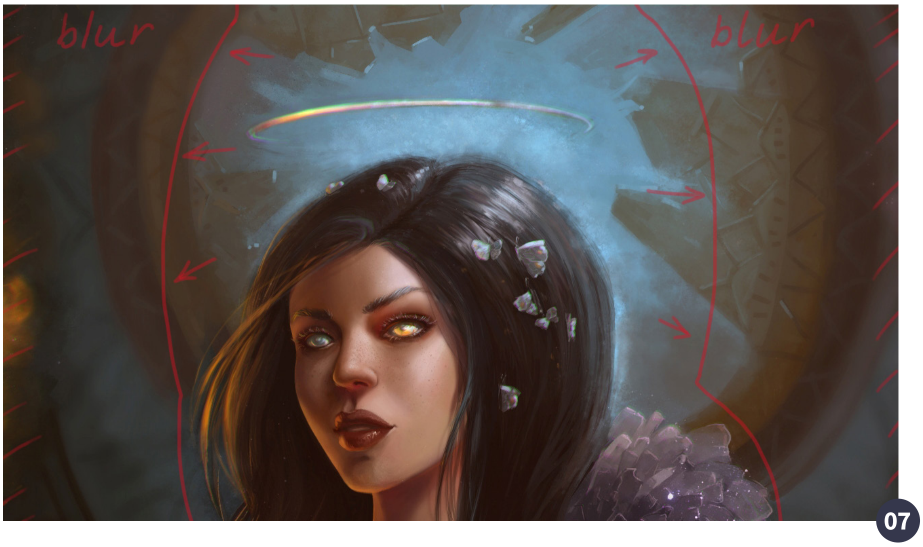
There was a broken sphere behind the head. This recalled the idea of a halo and reinforced the idea that she was a goddess. I also made more interaction between the yarn and her dress. Wool ▶



☐ Drop Shadow
☐ Inner Shadow
☑ Outer Glow
☐ Inner Glow
☐ Bevel and Emboss
☐ Contour
☐ Texture
☐ Satin
☐ Color Overlay
☐ Gradient Overlay
☐ Pattern Overlay
☐ Stroke

Outer Glow
Structure
Blend Mode: Color Dodge
Opacity: 71 %
Noise: 6 %
Elements
Technique: Softer
Spread: 0 %
Size: 193 px
Quality
Contour:
☐ Anti-aliased
Range: 50 %
Jitter: 0 %
☑ Preview

06



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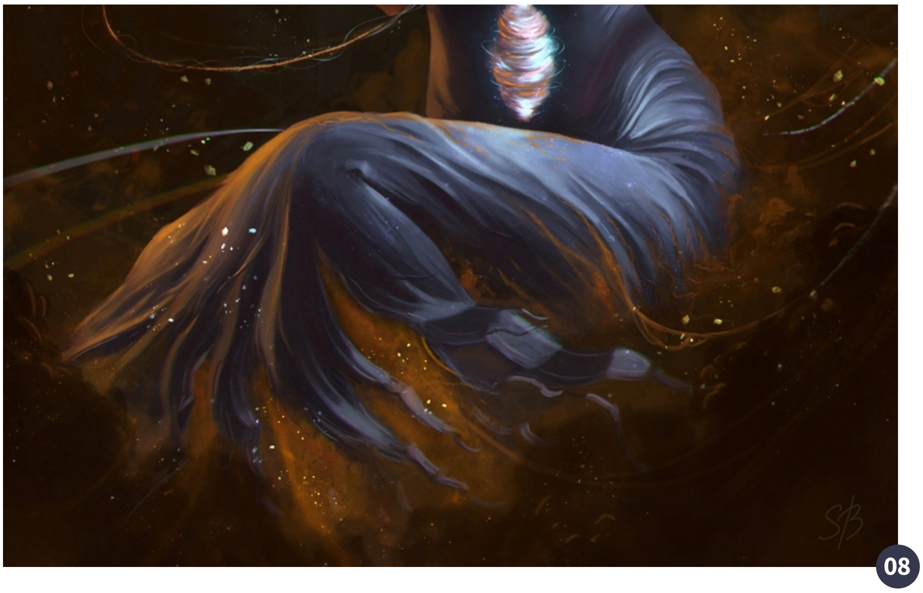
04 Switching the pose for a more dynamic one

05 The skin had a few different shades of color

06 Using the Smudge tool and layer settings to add effects to the scene

07 The background was blurred in places to emphasize the character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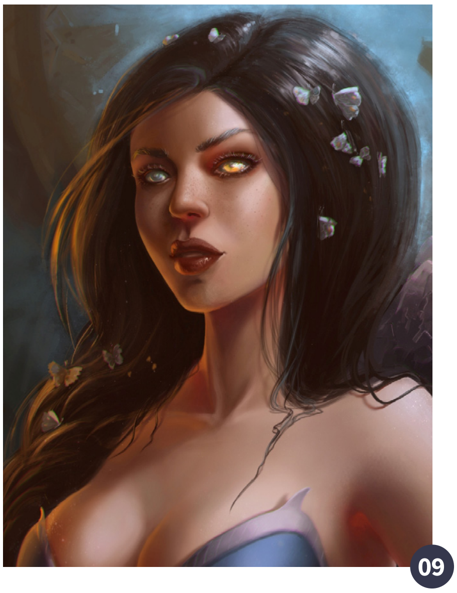

09

was woven into the folds of the skirt here and there along the fabric. The patterns behind were not expressed vividly and were slightly blurred – this created a focus on the character.

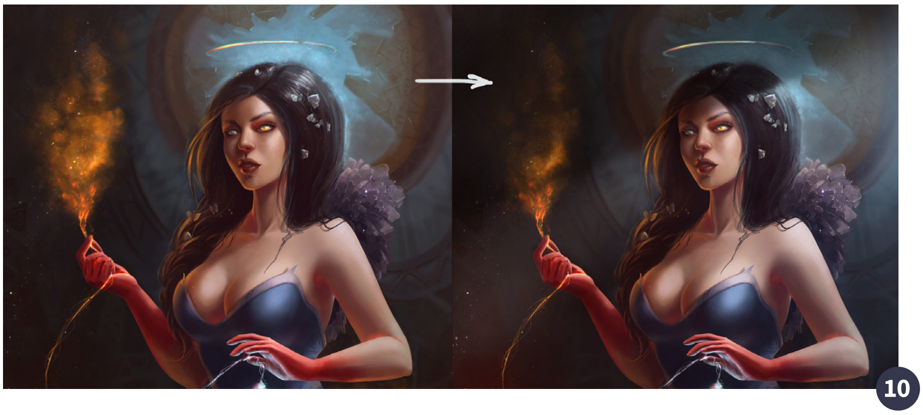
08 Draw a dress without stress: The next step was to paint glare from reflections on the spindle and yarn on the woman's clothes. I cut the bottom of the skirt to emphasize the relationship with the background. I set the color of the spindle and could then draw reflections on her clothes and hands. The blue color was great to highlight the red on her hands. I blurred some of the threads on her dress with the Motion Blur filter (Blur > Motion Blur) to make the scene much more dynamic.

The basic cold light source was from the side, so I added some bright spots on the face and shoulders. I did this on a new layer and used the Soft Light layer effect.

09 Details: I paid a lot of attention to the details in the drawing (especially when doing the first line-sketch). Many things were changed and removed in the process, but drawing the elements was very exciting for me. In the process of adding the color, I often make notes and sketches on new layers.

In order not to repeat the texture materials in this piece, I decided to create something similar to crystals or the translucent wings of butterflies. Consequently, I had the idea to draw a few butterflies on her hair.

Texture brushes were very useful for drawing the details – they eliminated unnecessary smoothness and gloss on the figure (if that's the effect you wanted to create).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10 Emphasis: The finishing line is near! I critically looked at the picture and made a few small corrections to the details. The final important thing was to assign the correct accents and divert the unnecessary details in the shadow.

I added bright rays from the side as her head was in the shade – it helped to highlight her glowing eyes and halo. Sometimes I use a little aberration on small areas to emphasize this too.

I advise you to postpone finishing the work for a couple of days. Take another look at it after taking a rest from this piece. If after a few days you are satisfied, then publish your work! ●

---

08 **Adding reflections and gleams of blue and orange in the folds of her skirt**

09 **Butterflies were added to her hair and a crystal decoration on her shoulder**

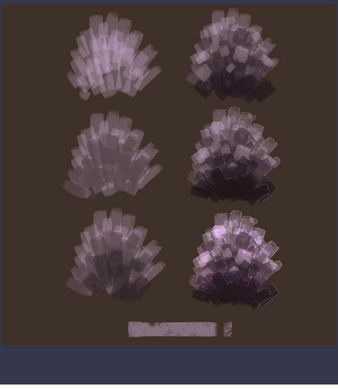
10 **Saturated light and shadow helped to distinguish major elements in the scene**

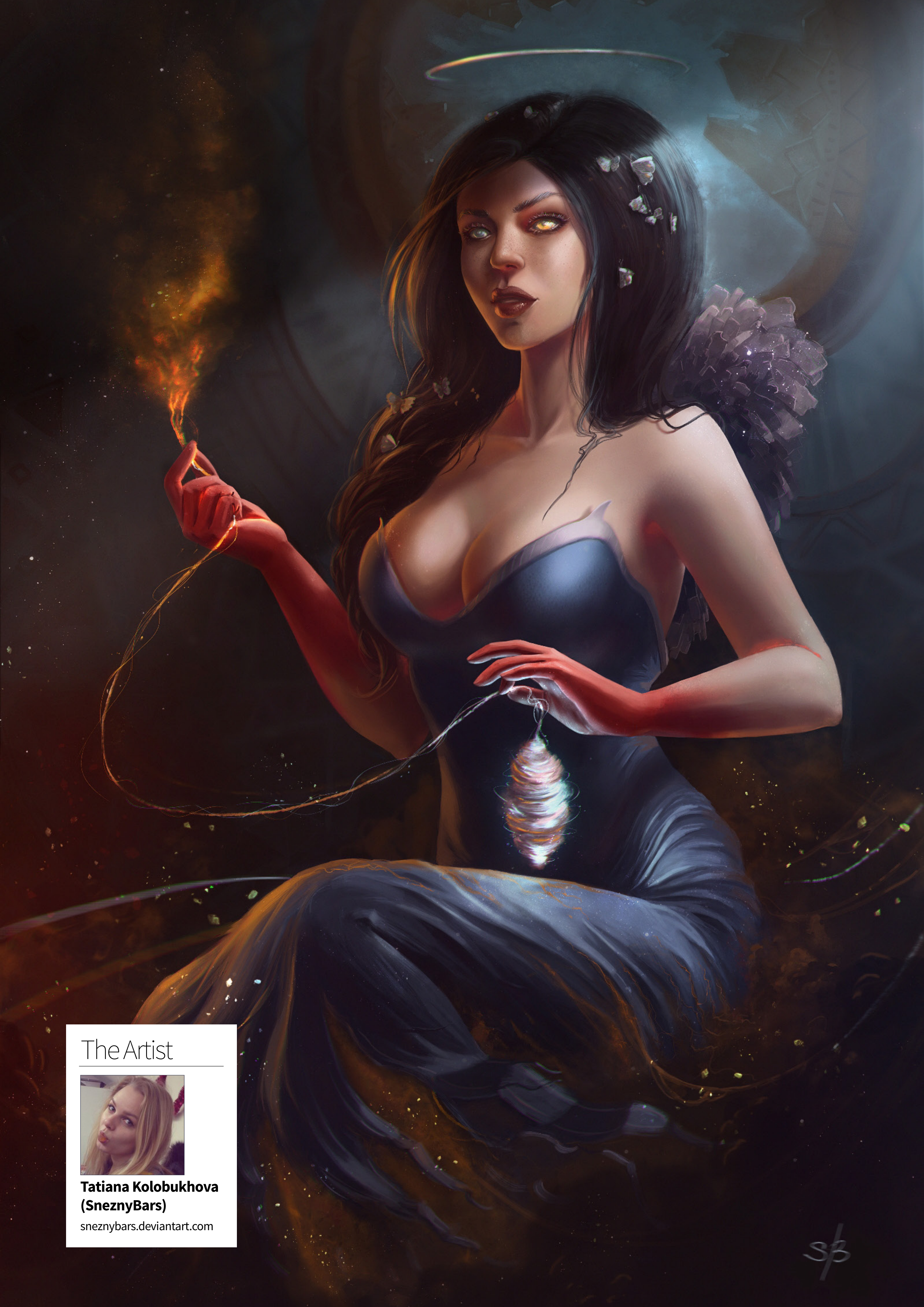
PRO TIP

How to draw a decoration

You can use a texture brush for drawing some crystals, butterfly wings or other necessary decorations that you need.

First, create the general shape of the object with a brush on 40% Opacity, and then add progressively darker touches. Finally, do a copy of a layer with the Color Dodge effect with an Opacity of 20%. You can then draw more details for an interesting effect.

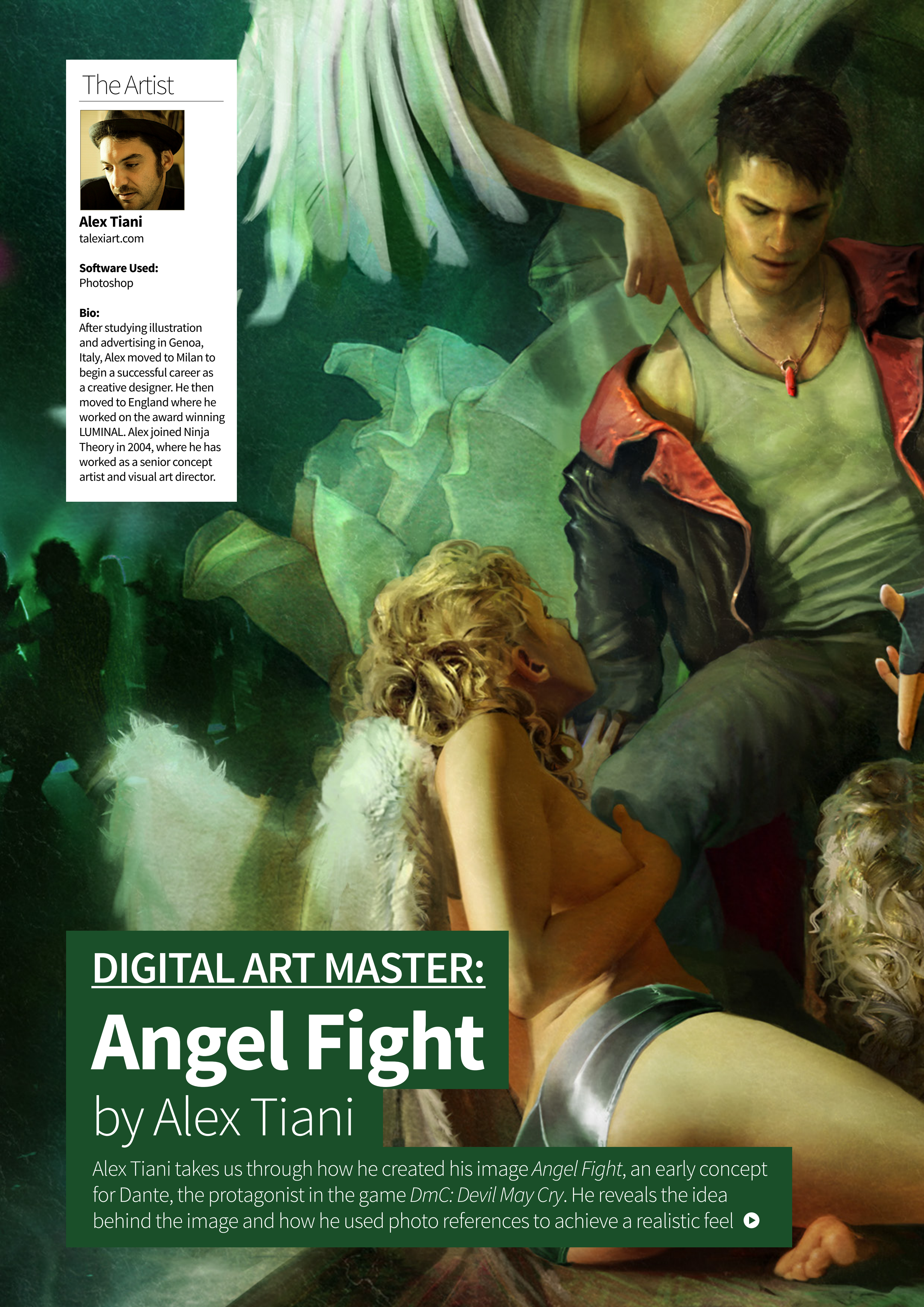




The Artist

Tatiana Kolobukhova (SneznyBars)

sneznybars.deviantart.com



The Artist

Alex Tiani
talexiart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

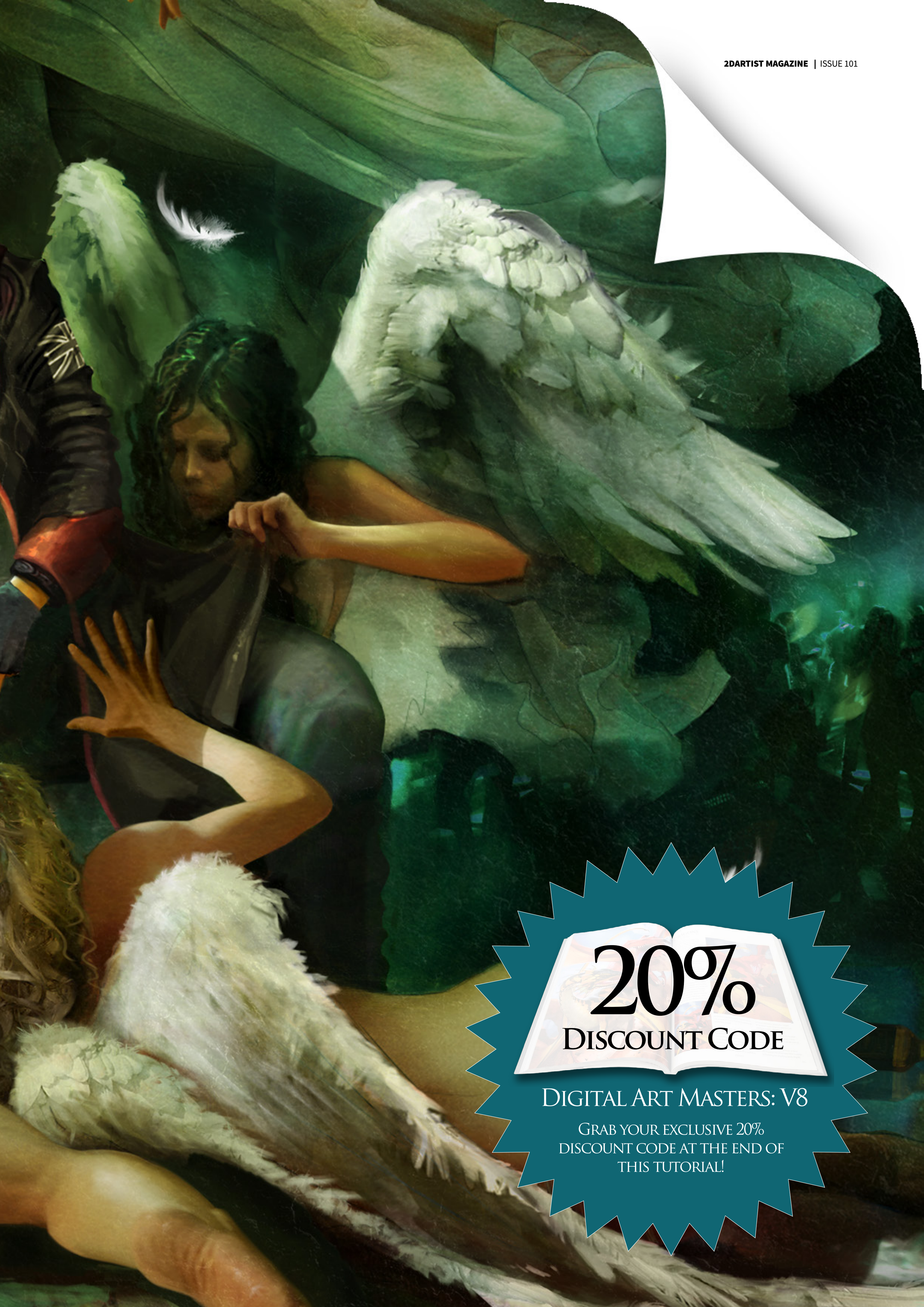
Bio:
After studying illustration and advertising in Genoa, Italy, Alex moved to Milan to begin a successful career as a creative designer. He then moved to England where he worked on the award winning LUMINAL. Alex joined Ninja Theory in 2004, where he has worked as a senior concept artist and visual art director.

DIGITAL ART MASTER:

Angel Fight

by Alex Tiani

Alex Tiani takes us through how he created his image *Angel Fight*, an early concept for Dante, the protagonist in the game *DmC: Devil May Cry*. He reveals the idea behind the image and how he used photo references to achieve a realistic feel



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This image was an early concept for Dante, the protagonist in our latest game *DmC: Devil May Cry*. I wanted to portray the atmosphere of the whole game as well as the personality of the character. Dante is young, rebellious and doesn't have a care in the world. Angels are perceived to be pure, innocent and beautiful, but even these higher beings are not beyond Dante's rebellion.

The image is intended to challenge perceptions, mixing classical art with modern, sexualized themes. The original image included elements of violence and nudity, with Dante pointing a gun at the angel before him.

Before public release the piece had to be censored, for obvious reasons. We had to think carefully about how to censor the image without spoiling it. We thought it would be good to set the scene in a modern night club environment and play on the ambiguity of not knowing whether the angels are real or just normal girls in fancy dress.

Composition

For an image to work, it has to have a focus where you want the viewer to look. This focal point should then lead the viewer around the rest of the image. In this case, Dante has to be the focus of the image, drawing attention to his action.

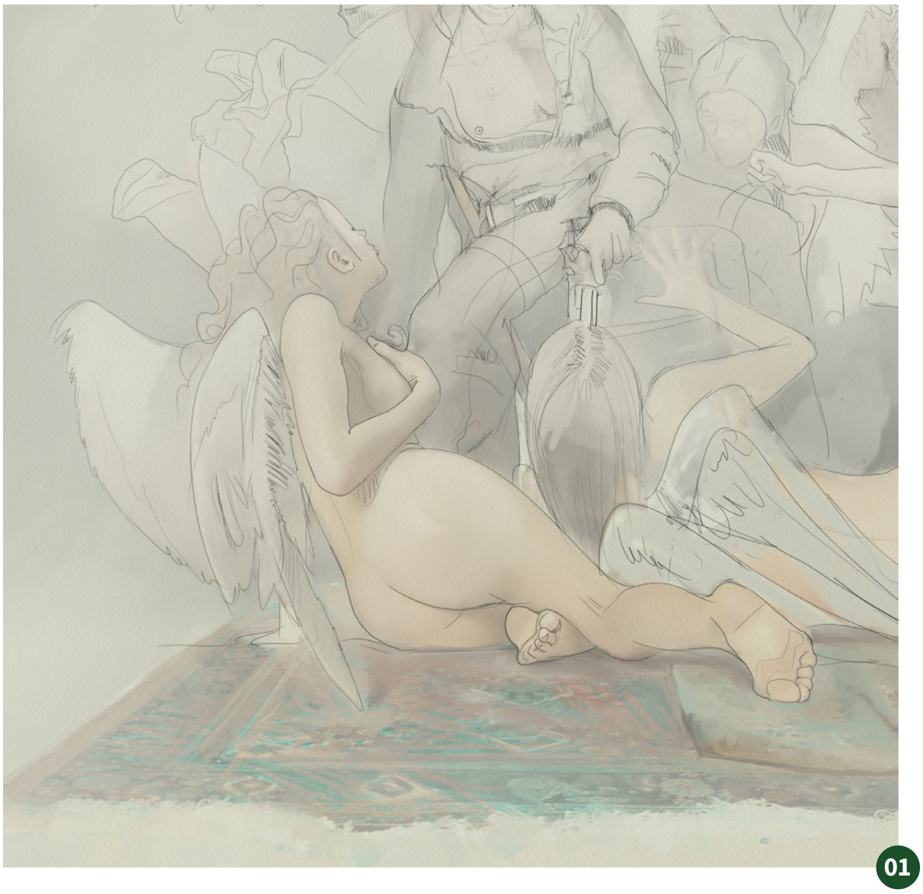
His hand gesture leads the eye to the angel below, who then leads you to the other two angels on either side. This journey should lead the viewer's eyes around the entire picture. Usually, I paint the main character looking directly at the viewer to create intrigue, but in this case it's the action that creates interest. If your attention is initially drawn to the angel's gold hotpants, your gaze is then lead straight back to the action as she is looking directly at Dante.

In Photoshop, I added definition to the composition by drawing pencil lines. Once the composition was finalized, I made a mental note of the areas where I needed to add further detail such as the faces, the wings and Dante (**Fig.01**).

Using photographs

As I wanted the characters to be realistic, I found the best technique was to photograph a model in the same pose and use that as reference (**Fig.02**). I then positioned the photograph over the painting at roughly 50% opacity to create realistic-looking skin.

I used the same technique for the wings. I found that images of swan wings best matched my vision of angel wings (**Fig.03**). I found suitable



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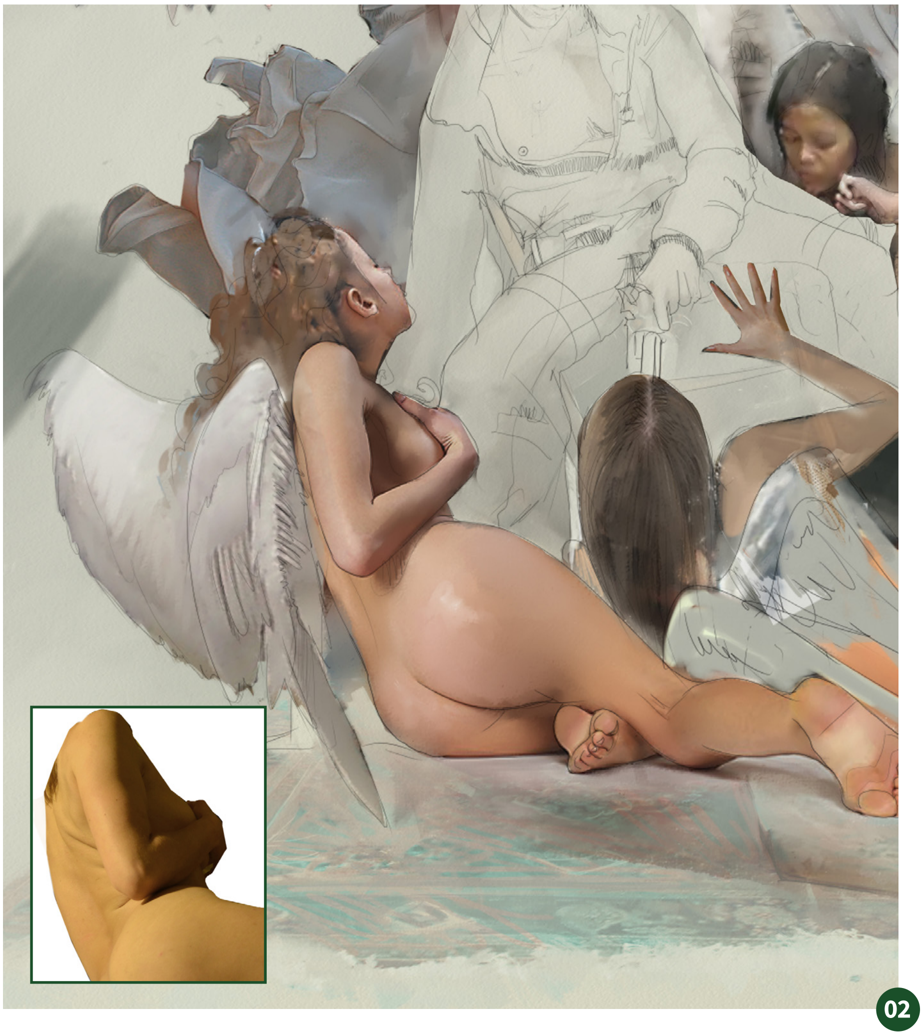

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> **"Usually when I start an image I have a vision in my mind of how the final piece will look"**

photographs and overlaid them with the picture. I then painted over the image using the Photoshop Smudge tool. To give the skin a realistic, warm fleshy effect, I added shadows in a light red color set to Overlay (**Fig.04**).

Usually when I start an image I have a vision in my mind of how the final piece will look and every step I make from that point on contributes towards this realization. However, as I paint the image it rarely has the contrast that I want.

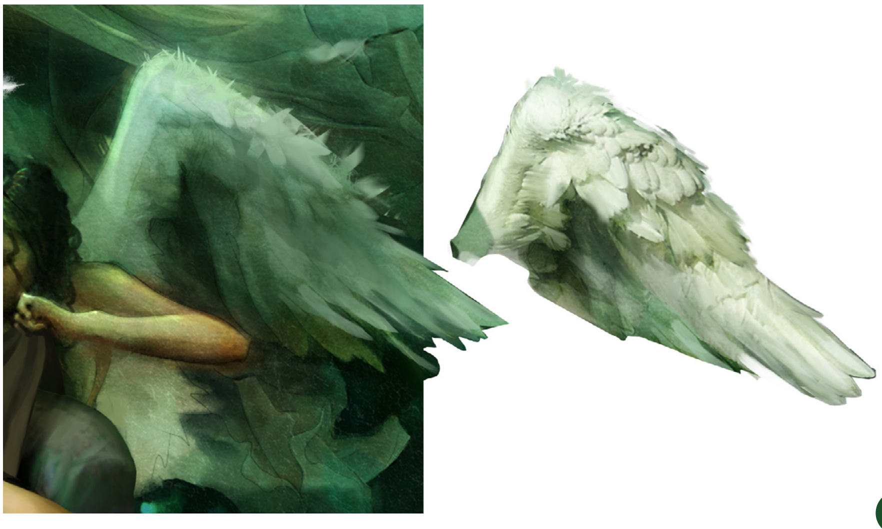
As a remedy, I have found that copying the rough image and then pasting it back on top of itself creates multiple layers and gives the image a lot more contrast and intensity. I usually multiply by around 50% as everything is made slightly darker through this technique. I then paint the spotlights over the top.

I have two techniques for this: I either mask the Multiply layer and erase the dark layer to bring the lighter layer through, or I put a black layer on top of the image and with it set to Color Dodge to make it transparent, I then paint on top with a light color to create nice lighting (**Fig.05**).

As a final stage, I added a texture over the image to give the impression of an aged painting. One is a canvas texture and the other a cracked paint texture (**Fig.06 – 07**). You have to be careful not to make the image too dirty using this technique: smooth the textures in the focal areas to avoid it becoming a distraction.

Conclusion

I think using classical painting as a reference can help people to understand a picture because they already have a culturally ingrained familiarity with this type of image. It is similar to basing a fantasy creature on a real animal to give the viewer a strong point of reference. ●



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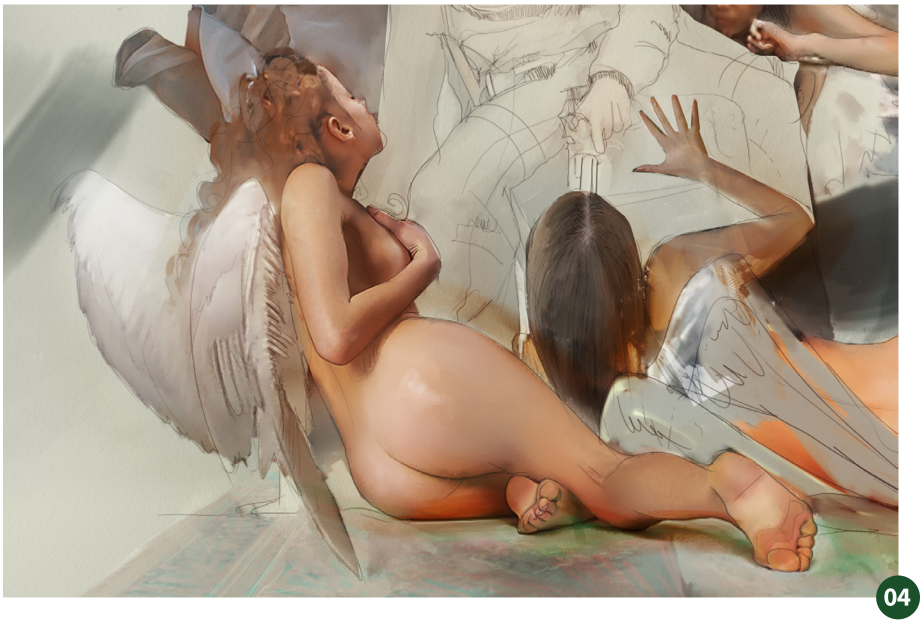

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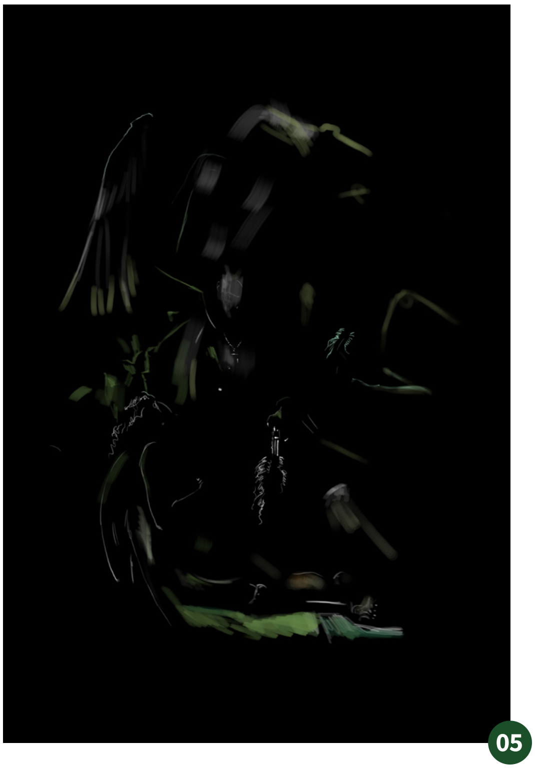

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:VOLUME 8

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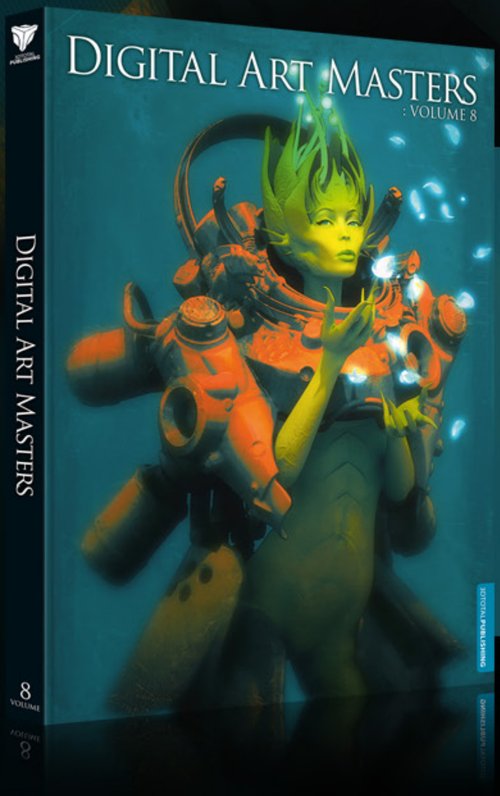

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